

The ~ ~ ~ ~ STRANGER

~ J ~ F ~ J ~
CALDWELL

2d
75

100

THE STRANGER



THE STRANGER

By J. F. J. CALDWELL

Author of "The History of a Brigade"

New York and Washington
THE NEALE PUBLISHING COMPANY

1907

p 520

Copyright, 1907,
BY THE NEALE PUBLISHING COMPANY

THE STRANGER

CHAPTER I

Julia Field, fourteen years of age, naturally grew weary of sitting silent, in the twilight, before the smoldering fire. And so, after many impatient sighs, she sprang up, exclaiming, "Will Tom never come!"

Receiving no answer, she walked to the bow-window, stared at the white, smooth highway, the lights that glimmered in the neighboring farm-houses, the leaden clouds and the volume of descending snow, strummed on the window pane, cooled the tip of her nose against it, and hummed a little. Finally, deriving no information or comfort from these performances, she returned to the hearth, crying again, "Mamma! Eleanor! Do you think Tom will ever come?"

"My dear," replied her mother, with a sigh and a smile, "I have no reason to think your brother will fail to do what he has so often done in wilder weather than this."

"But it is nearly dark," urged Julia, "and the snow is a foot deep, and the wind is blowing a hurricane."

"He will come before long, no doubt," said Mrs. Field.

"But he ought to hurry," persisted Julia; "the weather is horrible, and he knows we are all waiting for that dreadful letter."

"Eleanor, not you, is the proper person to com-

plain of the delay, and she bears it patiently," said Mrs. Field, mildly.

"Oh!" cried Julia, "Eleanor could sit calm and cheerful if she expected a summons to the north pole or darkest Africa! I'm not a philosopher!"

"All things come to those who wait," said the elder sister, smiling.

"Oh, bother!" exclaimed Julia. "I don't want the letter to come; for I know it will tell you to come right away to that detestable South, to be snubbed, and starved, and scared, and perhaps Ku Kluxed. But I know it will come; and I want it over. If you've got to be torn away from our sweet Connecticut Valley, and killed down there by rebels and bushwhackers, I want you to get ready to die, and mamma and me to prepare for your death—that's all."

"And that's quite enough, to be sure," returned Eleanor, laughing. "The victim ought to be promptly prepared for the sacrifice, and her afflicted family should not be delayed in the preparation for their bereavement. You are more of a philosopher than—"

"I do believe there is the old boy," interrupted Julia, and rushed out of the room, and out of the house, banging doors and upsetting a chair in her impetuous course.

After a few moments she returned, fairly dragging her brother, a tall, athletic fellow, and crying: "I knew he had that hateful letter! He won't give it to me; but he shall surrender it to Eleanor, so we can hear what misery is fixed for us." Eleanor took the letter, opened the envel-

ope, unfolded three sheets of large letter-paper, and read it through in silence.

At last she said, in a somewhat unsteady voice: "The letter is from my friend Agnes Meacham. It is not altogether cheerful or encouraging; but it does not describe quite as gloomy a prospect as Julia suspects."

"Why don't you read it?" inquired the latter, petulantly. "Let us judge for ourselves."

"You are right," returned her sister, and she read it to them:

"My dear, dear Eleanor:

"I have delayed in answering your letter of 21st ult., because I have been anxious to give you all the arguments pro and con in the matter of the school at Cherenden, about which we have been corresponding. Captain Meacham and his garrison—his company of about a hundred men—are stationed, as you know, at Upton, the county-seat. Cherenden is twelve miles northeast of this town, and two miles from the railroad station. We have, therefore, very little personal acquaintance with the people or affairs of that village. The Captain has been there several times during our six months' residence here; but I have been there only once, and know absolutely nothing of any person in the village. The population is about five hundred, the majority of whom are colored people, but there is said to have been much wealth there until the close of the war—principally in land and slaves. Several families owning large and valuable plantations near the village lived there, while several others lived on their

plantations within two or three miles of the village. They were, I am informed, an intelligent and refined people, proud of their blood, and not very liberal of any opinions conflicting with their institutions or traditions, but at the same time frank, hospitable and generous, the men brave and courtly, the women virtuous and dignified. But they were all secessionists, and they lost many of their young men in the war, a good deal of their property being burned or carried away when the Union army passed through in 1865 (by stragglers and bummers we know, for the troops did not march within several miles of the village); and finally, they lost their most valuable possessions in the emancipation of their slaves. It is not surprising, therefore, that the people of the community have no liking for Northern people, for they no doubt imagine that all of us are of the same kind as those who burnt their dwellings, plundered their barns and meat-houses, and carried off their horses and cattle.' ”

“That’s very silly,” volunteered Julia, in a tone of contempt.

“‘I ought, however,’ ” resumed the reader, “‘to say that George (that’s my husband, the Captain) says that he has found the men there whom he has met quite intelligent and courteous—fully equal, in spite of the isolated situation, to any he has seen in any Southern city.’ ”

“I have no doubt of it!” exclaimed Julia, scornfully.

“Not very hard to believe!” grumbled Tom in his deep bass voice.

Eleanor read on: “‘We know nothing of the

ladies of the place. My only meeting with any of them, except Mrs. Anderson, the hotelkeeper's wife, has been on the street, where almost all of them stared at me for a moment, gathered their skirts close, and gave me an abundance of room on the sidewalk.' ”

“And Mrs. Meacham is the prettiest and sweetest woman in the world!” cried Julia.

“Amen, *ma soeur*,” responded Eleanor; “but don't interrupt.”

“The Captain says they have a nice school-house, with two large school-rooms and one private room for the teacher, located about five hundred yards from the “public square” or business part of the village, in a large grove of fine oaks. The trustees, who are men of substance, guarantee the teacher forty dollars per month, with the expectation of raising it if her teaching and management prove satisfactory. These trustees say that Northern birth and rearing will not matter to them. Fuel, school furniture and all other appliances will be provided by the trustees. The salary will be paid at the end of each month. Right good board and lodging can be had at the hotel for twenty-five dollars per month, including fuel and lights; and Mrs. Anderson says she will also have your washing included, if you come.

“The village, I should add, is located on high ground, in a hill country, is well drained (by nature, of course), and is quite healthy.

“Now, on the other hand, the prospect is not very inviting, because of the temper of the people. What is commonly called “social ostracism” throughout the South is practised in all its sever-

ity in such back-country settlements as this. Men from the North can get along pretty well with men here, in business transactions. The Captain says that he never found more truthfulness, fairness and uprightness, in business, than he sees here, and that good breeding shows almost universally among the men—provided a Northern man keeps clear of politics. But I have never seen anything like the quiet, silent scornfulness of the women toward all of us. One glance is all they vouchsafe me. When I meet one on the street she gives me an icy look, gathers her skirts, gazes into the distance, and passes on. I saw one of them leave her pocket-book lying at the railroad ticket office here, in Upton, and she was hurrying toward the approaching train. I picked up the dainty little thing and hurried to hand it to her, telling her she had left it. She bowed profoundly and exclaimed, "Oh! I am so much obliged to you. You are very, very kind," in a tone that almost froze me. And she was a handsome, well-dressed and very modest-looking person! On another occasion, at the hotel, I fell into a conversation with a pretty, lady-like woman, at the table, in the Captain's absence, and enjoyed greatly her sweet voice and her cordiality and grace of manner. The moment the Captain (in his uniform, of course) came and sat down beside me, addressing me in words which indicated our relation, the woman's countenance settled into a fixed, hard expression, and her reluctant response to my next remark to her told me plainly that our conversation was at an end.' "

"The vixen!" cried Julia.

“‘Now,’” continued the letter, “‘a man may do pretty well without social attentions, and even without social recognition; but can a woman—that is, a woman of your pride, your sensibility, your frank nature and your rearing? Can you—beloved and sought after all your life—stand isolated, shut off, ostracised by the women of the community? I think not, my dearest Eleanor; and though I should be most delighted to have you so near that I might often look into your brown eyes and hear your voice, I must say that I dare not encourage you to come here. Your wages would be paid; perhaps you would be able to control your scholars; no one would do you bodily harm, or actually insult you; but I really believe that you would pine and die under the unbroken, inflexible, cruel ostracism I have attempted to describe.’”

“There now!” cried Julia. “I knew it! Mrs. Meacham is a wise woman as well as a good one. I hope this ends it.”

“It’s about as I expected,” said Tom, grimly, shaking the empty sleeve of his coat with his short stump of arm there remaining. “I didn’t grudge the arm I lost in helping to beat those rebels, and I do not regret it now.”

“It is a sad picture that Agnes has painted,” sighed Mrs. Field; “but I am not surprised. It will be long before the people of the two sections become reconciled.”

“I don’t want any reconciliation!” exclaimed Julia. “I don’t want anything to do with those abominable people.”

“So,” said Tom, “we’ll drop the matter and

keep Nell here with us—or at least a little nearer home.”

“I do not doubt we shall do very well without any Southern help,” remarked Mrs. Field, in a tone intended to be cheerful.

“To be sure,” cried Julia, going to her sister and kneeling so as to lay her head against the other’s shoulder. “We’ll do very well. Tom will get some more cows and you and I will make great quantities of butter, and sell it at a big price, and then we’ll get more poultry, and raise dozens and hundreds of chickens, and make a lot of money. And maybe they’ll revive the school at the cross-roads; and if they do, they’ll make you teacher, and you can live here at home; and—good gracious, what’s the matter, Nell? What are you thinking of? You are so still, and look so hard into the fire!”

Eleanor smoothed the mass of brown hair against her shoulder and said slowly, “Perhaps I shall go, after all. The prospect is not inviting; but then it may be my duty to risk as much as Agnes has warned me of, or even more.”

“What!” shrieked Julia. “After all you’ve read about those barbarians!”

“I shall not decide just now,” said Eleanor, calmly. “I must think over the matter for a day or two. I have—so Agnes informs me—ten days from the date of her letter, to make up my mind. That gives me a week from to-day.”

“But, dear,” began her mother.

“Mamma, dear,” returned Eleanor, with a sigh. “I feel tired now. With your consent I’ll look after Tom’s supper.”

CHAPTER II

There lived, about half a mile from the home of the Field family, an aged spinster named Rachel Norton. She dwelt in her own old, unhandsome house, with no other co-tenant except a very deaf, red-faced, busy "help," not many years younger than herself. She was an austere woman, associating very little with her neighbors, taking no part nor interest in neighborhood gossip, whether harmful or harmless, visited only the sick and poor, and was rarely seen in public except at church. But she had some means—supposed to be much greater than they were, because consisting mostly in bonds and stocks, yielding dividends, which were forwarded to her in mysterious-looking envelopes; and she had traveled, not only to Boston and New York, but also along the Great Lakes, and it was thought even to New Orleans. Her age was a matter of conjecture, for she was the oldest inhabitant in the immediate neighborhood. Besides, she was not born there, but came, no one knew whence, when she might have been thirty or forty years of age, for her spare figure, parchment skin and stony expression were of the kind which never appears young and hardly ever looks very old—like a boulder or a cedar post. This appearance, together with her reticence and her brevity, her pointedness and her precision of speech, caused her to be regarded as an oracle, though few persons ventured to seek her opinions or counsel.

She had, however, been less frigid to Eleanor Field than to all others, and she had been heard to say that there was a girl of good sense and good manners; and once she astounded everybody by having Eleanor take tea with her, to discuss the new steeple projected for the neighborhood church.

Eleanor Field now decided to ask the advice of this woman. Accordingly, on the morning after she received Mrs. Meacham's letter, she walked over the hard-frozen snow to the uninviting house on the hill.

At her knock on the massive hall door the mistress of the place came promptly, shot back the heavy bolt, twisted the grating knob, and faced the visitor.

"Come in, child," she cried, with a heartiness that almost startled Eleanor. "I saw you as you climbed up the slippery path and struggled against the wind. Come in, and warm yourself, before you tell me what's the matter; for something is always the matter when anybody comes to see Rachel Norton." She fairly pulled her visitor into the hall, slammed and bolted the door, led the way into a room where glowed a great wood fire, and almost pushed the half-frozen girl into the arm-chair on the broad hearth.

"Now," said the hostess, seating herself in the corner, and fixing her keen gray eyes on Eleanor's face, "what is the matter?"

She was informed in as few words as Eleanor found possible of the situation that confronted the speaker. She told of the letter from her friend in the South, and gave an outline of the

affairs of her family—their dependence on a small and not very productive farm; the state of her mother's health, which incapacitated her for any work whatever; the inability of the one-armed brother to do hard labor; the high price and scarcity of hired laborers for farms, and her own and her sister's unfitness for any farm employment beyond housekeeping.

When she had finished, the old woman forced her to take a cup of tea and eat a doughnut, and while she struggled through that undertaking, talked of the weather, her apprehension concerning the strength of the new church-steeple, and the doctrine of the unpardonable sin as announced by the pastor on the Sabbath before the last. Having spoken her mind on these things, she handed Eleanor a newspaper, requesting her to examine an article on the condition of Hindu women, and went out of the room. Fully twenty minutes elapsed before she returned. Then she resumed her former seat, hemmed loudly, looked Eleanor in the eyes, and announced in a stern, defiant voice,

"I'd go, if I were you."

"I am glad you so decide," said Eleanor, heartily. "It seems to me best to do so. My family, as I told you, are opposed to my going. But I knew you could form a more correct opinion than any of us, for you know something, personally, of the Southern people, and we really know nothing."

"You are right," said Rachel Norton, sententiously. "I have seen them in the middle South, and in the far South. I guess you can tell pretty

well what to expect from them. 'The men won't hurt you, of course; and I don't think they'll even cheat you, for, with all their faults (and God knows they've got a lot of them!) the men there are not given to cheating—not as much as in some more godly places.'

"The isolation—the ostracism," commenced Eleanor, "is what chills and dismays—"

"Pish!" cried the old dame. "I wouldn't care a last year's filbert for that sort of thing. Don't I get along very well without cronies, or even company of any sort? You should do your duty, and leave the rest to the Lord. Don't you believe He takes care of people that try to do right?"

"Oh, yes! And I hope I shall always trust Him."

"Well, then, put your trust in Him now. I think He likes for people to undertake hard things, depending on Him for protection and success." And then she rose and looked out of the window, indicating that the subject was disposed of.

Eleanor thanked her and resumed her wraps. The old woman showed her to the outer door, and there, to the young woman's amazement, put her hands on her shoulders, touched her brow with her thin, hard lips, and said, "God bless and keep you always, child!" Before Eleanor could speak or collect her startled senses, the door was banged and bolted.

* * * * *

It is not to be supposed that Rachel Norton's advice decided the matter. It did not determine Eleanor Field's mind, nor satisfy her family, but it contributed to confirm her in a very strong inclination to go South, and it consoled her people no little, for all the Fields had much respect for the judgment of the old woman who had held her own so long and so successfully; they thought that she had more knowledge of the South than any one else in their section of the country; and they knew that she had no romantic predilection for the people of the late Confederate States of America. Moreover, they felt assured that she was Eleanor's friend. So, after a long talk that same evening—a talk in which the mother protested and lamented, the brother argued and grumbled, the sister fretted and pouted, and all of them shed tears—it was conceded that Eleanor should go South to try her fortune, and start in forty-eight hours.

The preparation hours were full of work and pain to all of them. With the exception of Tom, none of them had been farther from home than Boston. He had served in the Army of the Potomac, and so had seen something of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia during three years, but only the little that the confinement of a soldier's life permits. He had seen nothing of Virginians or other Southerners except the hard fighting of their troops and, for a brief space now and then, prisoners taken in battle. The vast territory called "the South" was to them, therefore, a *terra incognita*, of most indefinite features

in itself, and peopled by a race of white men they had been taught to think their mortal enemies, whatever else they might be, and by a race of black men who, in spite of the romantic glamour that shone around them, they believed to be little more or less than unhappy, ill-used and harmless barbarians. She seemed to be going to a rough, wild land, to find the dominant race unfriendly to her and hers, and the suppressed or inferior race powerless to help her if it would, and utterly unfit for companionship. To her and her people's untraveled eyes it was a fearfully long journey she was to take—nearly a thousand miles by the route travelers must pursue; and on arrival what certainty was there that she would be able to earn her bread? She must pass an examination by a school board, and she must also satisfy them that she could impart knowledge to others, and that she would conduct herself according to their notions of propriety and the requirements of the situation.

Her mind was filled by day with gloomiest forebodings; her sleep was beset with fearful dreams. Perhaps her own resolution would never have borne her through these trials; certainly, she had to keep herself constantly reminded of the necessity of the undertaking; but with all the steeling afforded by this conviction, and all her hourly, agonized prayers for divine help, she more than once lost all heart and purpose.

On the last evening before her going she was on the verge of abandoning the enterprise. The sun was setting behind strata of gold and pink and purple clouds, here casting a silver sheen on

fields of snow, there framing brilliant blue or fleecy drapery around somber forests of pine. The breeze blew fresh and bracing. Cattle lowed and sheep bleated in the distance. Clear-voiced cocks crowed and the pigeons cooed from the dovecote. Beyond the wide expanse of meadows the river—her loved Connecticut—murmured melancholy music on its way to the sea. Far off she heard children singing "America," the hymn so familiar in every New England home, so dear to every New England heart. And she must say farewell to all this and to all it expressed to her—to all the life which she and five or six generations of her people had lived and loved; she must go a thousand miles away, among strangers, maybe among enemies, to a land where men were fierce, and nature was wild, where there was no likelihood of sympathy or friendliness, where there was no certainty of even bread to eat!

While lost in these mournful reflections she felt her sister's arm about her, and her face laid against her own. After a moment of convulsive embrace the child cried out:

"Oh, dear, dear Nell, why must you go away, and break all our hearts? Can't you stay? What shall we do without you? What can you do in that fearful South? Stay, Nell, dear Nell."

"I must go," returned Eleanor, "and—and you break my heart, already full of woe!"

They spoke no more, but stood in a close embrace, weeping bitterly.

And after a while Tom came, with bowed head, and laid his great right arm on their shoulders.

"Can't you revoke your decision now?" asked

he, half choked with emotion. "It is not too late, and I feel that you are going to your grave. Think of the loneliness, the pain, perhaps the persecution you will suffer in that land of our enemies."

"Are all the people our enemies?" inquired Eleanor. "I feel sure they are not. Surely they are not so different from us as to be cruel, or even altogether unfair, to any one, especially to a woman coming among them to earn a living by upright methods."

"Well," said Tom, recovering his customary manner, "I won't say that all of them are bad people. Their soldiers fought well—magnificently; they endured privations heroically; they were generous; and I think they believed they were right."

"If they were loyal to what they thought a righteous cause," suggested his sister, "and were magnanimous in war, I should think they would be at least just in time of peace."

"In some circumstances and under certain conditions," said Tom. "But during these six years of peace they have become more embittered against us than ever before. I suspect that the measures used in their 'reconstruction,' as the politicians call it, have been pretty harsh in some respects, and sometimes unreasonable. But whether properly or not, they feel wronged, and they blame all the people of the North for everything they suffer. Perhaps we should do the same, if we were in their position. That's not, however, the point for you to consider. There is that feeling against all of us (except, of course,

those who prove themselves to have been *copperheads*) and you are going to suffer just as if you had killed their soldiers, set free their slaves, denied their right to self-government, and opened the ballot-box to the negroes."

"Nevertheless," said Eleanor, her voice now steady, and her manner resolute—"Nevertheless, I will make the venture. I feel that, doing my duty faithfully, keeping clear of all political discussion, all race controversies and all social questions, and trusting the God of our fathers for strength, I shall succeed."

"If you should fail?" asked Tom.

Eleanor's face brightened into a smile. "You used almost Macbeth's very words. Now, Tom dear, there are two renderings of his lady's answer, to wit, 'We fail!'—in indignant protest against the mere suggestion of failure; and the other, 'We fail'—an expression of resolution to meet such a frustration of their plan. Now, while loth to imitate that wicked woman, I answer you in the latter manner. But I am reminded of a better case—that of Esther when she was preparing to go before King Ahasuerus, 'If I perish, I perish!' My errand is not so grand, by a great deal, as Queen Esther's; but it is fully as meritorious, and I answer you in her words."

That ended the discussion. At sunrise the next morning she was on her way to New York, whence, on the following day, she sailed for the Southern seaport nearest her destination.

CHAPTER III

It is as true now as it was in Horace's time that they who travel across seas change the sky but not their minds; it is also true that care, more or less black, rides behind every horseman. But if we journey far enough and fast enough, our minds derive some occupation and relief from the scenes we meet; and we become, in some measure, oblivious of the disagreeable companion at our back. Such was Eleanor Field's experience in her journey, and she found the physical discomfort of sea-sickness no small help in banishing troubles of the brain.

At her landing in port she was met by her friend, Mrs. Agnes Meacham, who, now that she had come, was determined to make it as agreeable as possible for the stranger. Together they spent two days in the city, viewing what had been left by "time, war, flood, and fire," the marks of one or more of which destroying agencies were almost everywhere visible. Together they sped, by railway, through primeval forests of cypress, live-oak, magnolia and pine, through silent swamps where alligator and turtle aired themselves in full freedom and security, along and across deep, dark, noiseless, smooth-flowing rivers, on whose banks grew rank grasses and apparently impenetrable tangles of vines, and above them hung and waved from every limb of tree the long gray moss, in grace and silence. The appearance was far more grave and grand than she

had ever dreamed, and when to that was added the balmy, odorous atmosphere, so still, so soothing, so solemn, she could hardly resist the persuasion that she was on enchanted ground.

"How rich and sweet and composing this scenery is!" she cried.

"It is not hard to realize that the inhabitants are greatly attached to such a land," returned her companion.

"No," said Eleanor. "I can understand fully the lines of the Southern woman, which I have repeated to myself twenty times this morning:

"I sigh for the land of the cypress and pine,
Where the jessamine blooms, and the gay woodbine,
Where the moss droops low from the old oak tree:
Oh, that sunbright land is the land for me."

Then, after a pause, "But the region we are going to is not of this kind?"

"No, indeed," answered her friend, laughing. "It is very different—a region of hills, many of them very bare and gully-worn, of little original forest, and with little more foliage, at this season, than you left in New England.

And before long they were in a totally different scene, where the streams poured over shoals, where the hills were high and the hollows correspondingly deep, where there were long irregular lines of gullies washed into the red clay, where the fields showed only brown sedge grass or dead stalks of corn and cotton, with only small bodies of original forest timber, and where the farm settlements consisted mostly of small unpainted wooden barns, cabins, principally built of logs, and tottering

sheds or stables. Occasionally a large wooden residence, painted white, with an excess of chimneys, and with green window-shutters relieved the dullness and inferiority of other buildings. These she rightly conjectured to be, or to have been, the dwellings of the wealthier planters; at the same time, the contrast and disproportion between these homes and the rough, poor structures elsewhere sadly suggested poverty and stagnation.

Agnes Meacham observed the effect of these painful thoughts on the stranger, and endeavored to cheer her by describing the fine climate, the productiveness of the soil, the ease of living, the peaceable bearing of the people (except under political excitement), and whatever else appeared to her to be favorable or charming; but Eleanor Field arrived at Upton in profound melancholy, every romantic fancy utterly extinguished.

* * * * *

The newcomer, on the suggestion of Mrs. Meacham that it would do her no good to be seen as the friend and associate of the garrison commander's wife, did not stop at Upton, as both she and Mrs. Meacham wished she might do, but proceeded alone to Cherenden Station, twelve miles from Upton. Before leaving her, however, Mrs. Meacham handed her friend two sealed letters from her husband, one of them addressed to "Col. Reginald Q. Tomlinson, Chairman of Board of Trustees, Cherenden Academy," the other to "Mr. Asa T. Cogburn." The latter gentleman, Mrs.

Meacham informed her, was a merchant well known to her husband, with whom he had had some business dealings, who was requested, by this letter, to give Eleanor any assistance she might need in procuring board or other accommodation.

On her arrival at the station Eleanor found a two-seat hack, with considerable space in the rear of the seats, which the driver told her was employed in conveying travelers between the station and the village. She took passage at once, and her baggage, consisting of a large trunk and bag, was tumbled into the hack by the coal-black driver, with a violence that threatened to break through the floor of the rather frail vehicle. Then off went the hack at a jerk and jump, the driver bawling "Git along!" at the top of his voice, and applying his heavy whip energetically to the pair of lank, ill-groomed horses.

For a time they moved on in silence, the driver on the front seat and his passenger on the rear one. But he was never silent toward his team, but called to them incessantly, "Git up!" and "G'long dar!" and "Look what yer 'bout!" occasionally calling them "rascals," "varmints," and the like.

After a time, the driver looked back toward her, and inquired, "Is you all right, ma'am?"

She answered that she felt very well, but found the road somewhat rough.

"Why," cried he, "we calls dis a mighty fine road. G'long dar!"

Just then they plunged into a depression which caused a considerable jolt and the man volun-

teered the admission that there were some "on-even" places in the road.

They passed a farm where Eleanor saw a barn-like building, most of the under portion of which was open, and in that space saw two mules walking around a central post, driven by a small negro. She inquired what that was.

"Oh!" replied the driver, "dat's a gin."

"What is a gin?"

"Cotton gin. Ain't you nuvver seed a cotton gin?"

"No," she answered. "And what is that thing out there, with the two long timbers meeting at the top and reaching down, on opposite sides, nearly to the ground?"

"Ya, ya!" laughed the driver. "Dat's a screw—cotton screw whar dey packs de cotton bales. Ain't you nuvver seed a screw?"

On her answering in the negative the negro looked confused, and drove on in silence for some time, forgetting even to chide his team. Finally, he looked back at her and said, very seriously:

"I 'spec' you must be dat lady frum de Norf what we bin a-lookin' fur."

"I am from the North," replied Eleanor.

"Bless God!" cried the man. "I jis' wukked it out dat way, soon's I seen you at de depot, but I ain't know fur sartin ontwell I heerd you axin' 'bout gins an' screws. I'm mighty glad to see you, ma'am. Us cullud folks knows as how de folks in de Norf is our friends."

"How did you come to look for me?"

"Well, ma'am, Mr. Anderson—him what keeps de hotel—he says to me, day befo' yistiddy, 'Ned,'

says he, 'dar's a young lady a-comin' hyar fum de Norf, to teach school; an' I reckon she'll come to de hotel. So now,' say he, 'you be kyarful to bring her safe,' says he. And I says, says I, 'Mr. Anderson, I'm bound to do dat thing.' An' please God, hyar we is, an' mos' in sight of de village."

After a pause, apparently awaiting some response, he resumed: "When you gits to de hotel you'll find 'em mighty fine people—Mr. Anderson an' Miss Anderson, which she is his wife. An' you'll see a cullud woman dar, which her name is Clarissy. She's my wife. She'll take mighty good kyar on you. She's use' to waitin' on young ladies, an' she's got a good name wid all de folks what comes dis way. You jist tell her as how Ned druv you over in de hack. An' you tell her as how to do her bes' by you; an' I lay she do everythin' to yo' satisfaction. Now you ain't gwine to forget 'bout Clarissy an' Ned?"

She promised to bear in mind all he had said; whereupon he "blessed God" and flogged his horses vigorously. But after a few minutes he inquired about the weather "they had in de Norf." On her replying that she left the earth covered with snow to the depth of a foot or more, he was astounded.

"Why, I ain't nuvver seed sich a snow in all my life!" he exclaimed. "I seen one snow 'bout fo' inch' deep, five or six year ago, but dat de bigges' snow I uvver knowed on. We ain't had no snow at all dis winter, an' we ain't had 'nough to good whiten de groun' las' winter. Bless God! Snow foot deep!"

Amused, and encouraged to impart more sur-

prising intelligence, she said, "I have seen it twice that deep."

"Two foot o' snow on de groun'! Lawd a' mussy!" And then he shook his head and beat his horses soundly.

Eleanor saw that he doubted the correctness of her statement; and recollecting the incredulity of the Sultan of Bantam concerning ice, she said no more.

Presently they entered the village, and drove through a rough, muddy street, with little sign of life along it, to a dingy, two-story wooden building which proved to be the hotel. A fat, red-faced man, who sat alone in the long piazza on a chair tilted against the wall, rose when the vehicle stopped before the door, and came out to welcome her. His manners were more pleasing than his appearance, or the appearance of his house.

"Good evening, ma'am," said he, lifting his broad-brimmed felt hat. "I hope you had a comfortable ride. Let me help you. There—give me both your hands, and make a jump. That's the quickest and easiest way to get out of this high old hack of mine. Have to have it high to keep above the mud we have in winter."

Accepting his assistance she descended more comfortably than she had expected, for his strong hands lowered her gently to the ground.

"You are by yourself?" said he, with a rather suspicious look.

"Yes; I have traveled from Upton alone."

"Oh then," said he, cheerfully, "I reckon you may be the Northern lady Colonel Tomlinson told us about. He said there was a young lady

coming here soon, maybe to take charge of the school. Glad to see you. Hope we'll be able to make you comfortable."

"Thank you," returned Eleanor. "I presume I am the person he mentioned. I come from the North, and I am seeking a school."

"All right, ma'am. The Colonel charged me to show you every attention. He is a big man in these parts—a fine man; and I always take pleasure in looking after the people he recommends. But here comes my wife. Nancy, here is Miss Field, the lady the Colonel told us about."

Mrs. Anderson, as fat, though not quite as rosy as her husband, hurried down the steps, took Eleanor by the hand, led her into the hotel, and did all the talking—declaring that she felt so much for a young lady who had to travel so far alone, wondering how she could have come so soon and apparently so safely, and promising to make her stay with them as pleasant as their poor accommodations would allow. All these things were spoken in a tone and with a look that indicated real hospitality; and Eleanor followed the landlady to her room, feeling more cheerful than she had for hours.

She was shown to a chamber on the second floor—at the corner of the building and of two streets, and large and tidy, though very plainly furnished. The landlady began to call "*Clarissy*" from the time she entered the house, and continued to do so at short intervals during her progress, pausing in her talk, when in the room, to step to the open door and repeat the summons.

"This ain't a fine room," said she, bustling

around, shaking the pillows, smoothing the bed-cover, changing the location of chairs, inspecting the crockery and towels at the wash-stand, and going over almost everything. "This ain't a fine room, and we don't have fine fare, and we ain't fine people. *Clarissy!* But what we have is at your service, and welcome. *Clarissy!* So if anything don't suit you, or you want anything we haven't got, you just let us know—either me or Mr. Anderson, but better me, for men are—*Clarissy!* I wonder why that nigger don't come—though she's hard o' hearin'. Men are mighty forgetful, and very often don't understand—*Clarissy!* Good gracious alive! That nigger ain't too fat to get here by this time. *Cla—!* Oh, here you are at last."

A brown woman, fatter than landlord or landlady, waddled into the room, and explained with energy how she had been "fixin' Isham's new jacket on him, and then had to hook up Fannie Jane's frock, and they wouldn't let her go," and so forth.

"Well," said Mrs. Anderson, "start a fire for Miss Field, and then bring fresh water, so she can get ready for supper. I'll send Clarissy to fetch you to supper in half an hour. And so good-by—not forgettin' that you must tell us whenever you want anything." Then she hurried away.

During all this time the stranger had not been allowed to utter a word, except in thanks for the lady's wish to care for her. Nor had she much opportunity with Clarissy, who at once proceeded to say:

"Ned, what druv you fum de railroad—which

he is my husband—his full entitles bein' Edward Hammon—he bin tellin' me 'bout you, Miss, as bein' a mighty han'some lady, what talks kind, an' don't know much 'bout things in dese parts. Ned, he says I'm gwine to fin' you a good lady, an' I mus' take good keer on you—which I'm boun' to do, please God! So I'll make de fire."

Forthwith she piled quite a heap of wood on the huge iron andirons, thrust several pieces of lightwood under it, struck a match and applied it, and soon had great flames roaring up the chimney.

"An' please God, we'll try to make you nice an' comf'table, Miss—which you musn't be skeered to say when you wants anythin'. An' there's my daughter Easter, which she is ten years old, goin' on 'leven, an' she's a peert gal, what goes to school, an' kin read an' write fine—which me an' Ned ain't got no eddication, bein' as how both on us wuz slaves, when niggers didn't have no use fur book-larnin'. But Easter is a smart gal, an' she'll do anythin' fur you. An' I'll git some fresh water."

The water brought, Clarissy resumed her discourse, but Mrs. Anderson's shrill cry for "*Clarissy*" soon rang through the house, and carried away the voluble speaker.

Before long Clarissy returned to escort Eleanor to supper. In the dining-room she found the landlady seated at the end of the one table, some thirty feet in length, from which it seemed all guests were to eat. A shy-looking girl, of probably twelve years, clad in a red-figured calico, sat on Mrs. Anderson's left, the opposite place being

assigned to Eleanor. Next to the girl sat a boy, who stared from under a very bushy, unkempt head of sandy-colored hair. Next him was a smaller boy, who devoted most of his time to watching Eleanor. Beyond this group, at an interval of four or five feet, were ranged three or four middle-aged men, and six or seven young men. All honored the newcomer with a prolonged stare, and she saw from the corner of her eye that one of them—a very yellow-faced, long-haired youth—required a long time to get at his supper, and afterward paused frequently to observe her. They were all very quiet, however, and spoke in rather low voices; each one looked away whenever he encountered Eleanor's glance.

After a while that end of the table was enlivened by the entrance of a tall, gaunt man, clad in dark gray, wearing long, curling locks of raven-black hair, with trousers inside the legs of his cavalry boots, and jangling his spurs noisily as he walked.

"How are you, Colonel?" cried the middle-aged man at one corner of the table.

"Fine, fine," answered the newcomer in a loud voice.

"Colonel Jenkins, Mr. Brown," said the first speaker to one next him. "Mr. Brown, Colonel Jenkins."

"Oh," responded Mr. Brown, "I know Colonel Jenkins. Everybody knows him."

"To be sure," said the man with the hair and the spurs. "How are you all?"

All of them acknowledged the salutation in one way or another, while the Colonel took the end

seat, facing Mrs. Anderson, to whom he bowed and waved one hand, and who returned him a smile and a nod.

"That's Colonel Samuel Jenkins," said she to Eleanor. "Great cavalry officer in the war. Lives a mile or so out of town. Family used to be rich; but they haven't much besides land now. He and four unmarried sisters live together. I should like for you to know him. I think you'd like him. Talks pretty loud, but a fine man."

He soon began to entertain his hearers with some of his war experiences, in which "my command," "my regiment," "my men," and, above all, "I," were exceedingly conspicuous. Finally, raising his voice to a louder tone than ever, he proclaimed: "There we were, three of us—my adjutant, an orderly and me—cut off from the rest, and about forty Yankees charging us like devils, firing pistols, brandishing sabers, and riding like a whirlwind."

"Good gracious, Colonel!" cried the young man with long hair and sallow complexion. "How could you get away from such a crowd?"

"Colonel Jenkins never wanted to get away," indignantly exclaimed the man who had first welcomed the cavalry officer.

"Oh, Mr. Badkins!" remonstrated the Colonel in a patronizing voice, "you must excuse the young man; he don't know anything about war."

"He don't know anything about you," replied Mr. Badkins.

"But I'll tell you, Mr. Ashmore," proceeded the officer. "We didn't want to get away; and

we didn't get away. Some of them Yankees got away, and some of them—didn't."

"Ah!" sighed the young man, and set down his cup of coffee without drinking.

"How many did you get, Colonel?" inquired Mr. Badkins, after a respectful pause.

"Well," replied the Colonel, lightly, as if killing men was no great thing, "we were too busy to keep count accurately. When they went off, they left five on the ground, and some that went off were undoubtedly hurt."

"How many did *you* get?" asked Mr. Ashmore, eagerly.

"I can't say positively," answered the cavalier, in a modest voice, "whether it was three or four. I preferred to divide as equally as I could with my two men, giving each of them one, though my orderly always said that he thought he only hit a horse or two, and that the adjutant got one. Anyhow, it was a good fight for three men to make."

"I should say so!" exclaimed Mr. Brown. "Forty Yankees to three Confederates!"

"I said *about* forty," suggested the Colonel. "Of course, you couldn't count forty while the crowd charged us."

"Certainly not," cried Mr. Badkins. "And what was the end of it?"

"Well, sir," responded the Colonel, but it seemed with some reluctance, "the regiment, seeing our fight, rallied, and came up at the close and chased the crowd to their main body."

"But you fought without them," suggested Mr. Brown.

"To be sure," answered the Colonel, taking a great swig of coffee. "To be sure!"

"To be sure!" "To be sure!" echoed the others; and then they watched him with admiring eyes while he fed ravenously and in silence, with the air of one who has lost time.

Mrs. Anderson endeavored to distract Eleanor's attention from the narrator before he began his bloody narrative, for she appeared to be troubled as soon as he entered the room, no doubt because she was acquainted with his range of subjects and manner of speech; but the loud voice of the sanguinary cavalier prevailed, and the Northern woman heard every word he uttered. In a minute after he closed, Eleanor, having lost all appetite, excused herself, and went to her room. The landlady, to show her appreciation of her guest's feelings, and careful to allay apprehension of their being similarly offended in the future, took occasion to say to her, in a low voice, as she retired, "He does not lodge or board here, and seldom comes for a meal."

CHAPTER IV

The next morning, shortly after Eleanor had breakfasted, Colonel Tomlinson, chairman of the board of academy trustees, called upon Eleanor Field. He was a tall, portly gentleman ("sixteen stone and a half, sir," he liked to inform inquirers), and had quite a fine countenance, which, though giving little indication of intellect, was genial and dignified. His hair was long and snow-white, his face, round, ruddy and clean-shaven. He wore a suit of black broadcloth; his broad, rolling shirt-collar was spotless, as were his cuffs and shirt-front; he wore brown kid gloves; and carried in his hands a shining silk hat and a gold-headed walking-cane. When Eleanor entered he rose, bowed profoundly, and handed her the best chair in the parlor.

"You are Miss Field, I presume," said he, in a full, round, mellow, measured voice.

"I am glad to meet you, Colonel Tomlinson."

"Thank you," he returned, and seated himself with deliberation and care.

"I did not receive Captain Meacham's letter till this morning," he went on. "It appears that Mr. Anderson started it to me soon after dark by a negro man living on my place. But that individual fancied that this morning would do, and so I had to answer in person, as soon as I could come."

"I hope you were not hurried," said Eleanor.

"Oh, no; but I ought, if I had time, to have written you, and advised you of my coming."

His courtly manner and considerateness promised well, and the stranger felt drawn toward the dignified old gentleman, his very self-importance having a certain kindness in it."

"If it suits you," continued he, "we shall be glad to meet you at the academy to-morrow morning at ten o'clock. The other two members of the board of trustees, Mr. Huntley and Mr. Cogburn, as well as I, will be there at that time, unless you suggest some other hour."

She assented cheerfully, and then, after some inquiry concerning her journey, and an expression of pleasure on the state of her health, the old gentleman bowed himself out of the room.

The rest of the day, except an hour spent in exploring the quiet village, was devoted to letters to her mother, Rachel Norton and two other friends, and to reviewing in her mind such matters as she might be examined in the following day.

About nine o'clock, the following morning, Eleanor started afoot to seek the academy. Mrs. Anderson gave her directions which guided her part of the way; but the streets were so irregular, and the size of the squares so varying and the directions she received from the two or three negro boys she met so vague, that after half an hour of walking she discovered that she was on the border of the village, with no academy in sight. While she paused, undecided, a man on horseback came along the street, meeting her, and, observing her plight, raised his slouch hat, as if to

invite her inquiry. She told him at once that she was seeking the academy. For a moment he scrutinized her face, and then said that she would have to turn back and take a cross-street, indicating by word and a movement of his hand the end of that street which she should follow. Then, after starting, he drew rein again, and said, "If you do not object, I will accompany you part of the way, so as to make sure. These streets are confusing."

Then he dismounted, laid the bridle-reins over the pommel of his saddle, and showed that he intended to walk with her. She protested that he should not have that inconvenience, but he answered that a walk would rest him, since he had ridden about ten miles. So they walked together, the horse walking abreast of them in the roadway, as if accustomed to do so. She saw that the animal was a beautiful mare, perfectly black, with a skin of silken smoothness and brightness, and with the symmetrical neck, lean head, small ears, large nostrils, bright eyes, hard and muscular slender limbs, strong shoulders, strong loin, and the long swinging stride of the thoroughbred. The rider was of the appearance to be expected in the master of such a horse—tall, erect, slender, but evidently active and athletic, plainly but finely dressed in a dark gray suit, and wearing on his handsome face an expression of mingled sternness and melancholy which at once attracted and rebuked curiosity. When he stepped to the other side of the mare to adjust the saddle-girth, just after they started, the animal stretched her muzzle toward Eleanor as if seeking acquaintance. She was

fond of horses, and having been accustomed to handle them, she took the animal's head with both her hands and spoke some kindly words. The gentleman, coming round and observing the friendly intercourse between them, said :

"Delta seems to take to you—not at all a common occurrence with her."

"Oh," returned Eleanor, somewhat confused, "I laid hands on her without thinking. I am very fond of horses, and they are generally fond of me."

"This one is rarely friendly," pursued the gentleman, "and is considered vicious by most persons who know her."

"She is the most beautiful animal I ever saw, and the most graceful!" cried Eleanor. "And she deserves the pretty and singular name you give her. Delta? I never heard it before, except as applied to land at the mouths of a river."

"Or as the fourth letter of the Greek alphabet," he suggested, half smiling. "And thence was it derived. My father, just beginning the study of Greek, became the owner of this mare's great-granddam. Thinking that she should become the progenitress of a line of fine horses, he named her Alpha. Then followed Beta, Gamma, and Delta. It was a fortunate accident—for accident he himself told me it was; for if you run over that alphabet, you will see the letters well suited for names of females. Epsilon will hardly do; but then we have Zeta, Eta, Theta, Iota, Kappa and so on, down to and including Omega, with the only exception of Omicron and Upsilon."

That sounded very pretty and sensible to

Eleanor, and she said so. Her companion answered:

"Yes; but like a large proportion of good things, as well as evil ones, it was pure accident."

They soon reached a cross-street, which he directed her to take, adding such further description as would enable her to find the way to the academy. Then he bade her good day, and galloped away.

At the academy she found Colonel Tomlinson and Mr. Cogburn, who told her that the third trustee was sure to be there at the hour appointed and the interval was passed pleasantly enough in the conversation concerning the weather, the climate, and her own journey from home. Just before her watch indicated the hour, she heard the hoofs of a horse, and presently, to Eleanor Field's astonishment, the rider of Delta entered the room. He spoke to the two gentlemen, and bowed, hat in hand, to the stranger. On Colonel Tomlinson's starting to introduce him to her, he smiled gravely, and said, "I am glad to meet Miss Field; but she and I have already met," and he told in a few words, how it chanced.

The examination proceeded. Colonel Tomlinson opened it, taking for his department history, particularly that of England and America, in which he showed himself fairly well informed. Political questions he disposed of in a very pleasant, considerate manner. Finally, he assumed a positive manner, and inquired concerning the history of the American tariff. On general facts she answered without hesitation, and he seemed pleased, though, on account of his deafness, she some-

times had to repeat an answer. At last he called out:

"What are the proper and only proper uses or reasons for a tariff?"

"To raise the revenue necessary for the proper expenses of government, and, to use the current phrase, to develop important infant industries."

Colonel Tomlinson commented to Mr. Huntley on this reply in what he intended for his ear alone, but in a voice audible to the applicant as well as the other two trustees, "A d—d smart woman, William."

Mr. Huntley pulled his closely trimmed brown mustache, and fixed his dark, blue-gray eyes on the opposite wall. Mr. Cogburn winked his little blue eyes, sniffed the air, and scratched his thick roan beard.

"Ahem!" resumed the Colonel. "Was that sort of tariff ever opposed in the South?"

"No," answered Eleanor; "on the contrary it had, at the outset, the support of Mr. Calhoun and almost all, if not all, of his colleagues in Congress."

"A devilish smart woman!" whispered the Colonel, in the same voice as before. And then he bowed, smiling upon her, and turned her over to Mr. Cogburn for examination in mathematics.

Here she was pretty well tested on arithmetic; and then the examiner took from his pocket a sheet of paper and read a problem in algebra.

"Hello, Cogburn," cried the Colonel, in astonishment, "I didn't know that algebra was among your accomplishments."

"And it ain't," returned the other grumly. "I

got Parson Johnson to prepare some sums and work 'em out for me. And that's what I'm on now."

She went to the blackboard, and soon figured the demonstration. After comparing her work with his copy, the examiner nodded his head in approval. And so with several questions. Then he produced another paper, and read out a proposition in geometry. When she started to the blackboard, Mr. Huntley rose and said:

"That board is not clean; and the chalk is very bad. Let me draw the figure for you," and rapidly did so.

"Hello!" cried Mr. Cogburn, "you ain't got the letters right. You've got A where you ought to have B, and E where you ought to have F."

"Very well," said Mr. Huntley; "we'll change letters to suit you."

But Mr. Cogburn had much difficulty in following Eleanor's demonstration, and only acquiesced in it when he saw that Mr. Huntley approved. This closed his examination.

Then Mr. Huntley inquired if she expected to teach Latin and French. On her answering in the affirmative, he wrote rapidly on the blackboard the first lines of Horace's satire—"Qui fit Maecenas, xc"; then had her to translate, parse, and give derivations. His questions followed her answers more rapidly as they proceeded, and at length, when inquiring about the subjunctive mood, he plied them so fast as to embarrass her and cause her to hesitate. He saw her difficulty quickly, however, asked pardon, and resumed his

grave, deliberate manner. He gave no sign of approval or disapproval.

Next he handed her a tattered, dog-eared copy of Chapsal's *Literature Francaise*, which she had seen him take from a desk a few minutes before, and requested her to read a portion of Thierry's account of the assassination of Thomas a Becket, at which the book was opened. This was quite a relief to Eleanor after Horatian philosophy and Roman brevity, the clear, nervous style of this author leaving nothing to be supplied. She was allowed to read nearly two pages before being called upon to translate; and when she then looked above the book, she was surprised to see that he had approached within a few feet of her, and was regarding her with close but not unsympathetic scrutiny. After she had translated he examined her closely, particularly on verbs and accents, displaying his own careful study of the language, and testing pretty thoroughly her knowledge of it. But he still gave no sign of judgment on her answers.

Then he drew from his pocket a small volume, and opening it handed it to her. She saw the introduction to Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome*.

When, in response to the request of Mr. Huntley, she began to read, Mr. Cogburn interrupted her:

"What's that? 'Tain't a grammar nor rhetoric, is it?"

"No, it is not," said Mr. Huntley, dryly. "It is the preface to Macaulay's poems called 'Lays of Ancient Rome.'"

"Humph!" snorted Mr. Cogburn. "Is that for an examination on English?"

"Exactly," answered Mr. Huntley. "And if Mr. Cogburn will control himself for a while, I imagine that he will hear something connected with the English language. Proceed, if you please, Miss Field."

She read. When she paused after reading a page or more, he inquired, "Would *reliable* have done as well as trustworthy?"

"No," answered Eleanor.

"Why?"

"Because *reliable* is not correct English, either in reason or on authority."

"Ahem," grunted the Colonel, and Mr. Cogburn ejaculated "Aha!" and scratched his jaw.

The examiner proceeded to question her on grammar, a long process, and she was relieved when he concluded.

She was then informed by Colonel Tomlinson that they would through him communicate to her, in the course of the day, their decision on her application, he retaining her recommendations and certificates till that time. Then all of them arose, and she was dismissed.

Just before sunset she received a note from the chairman, enclosing her papers, and announcing, in rather stately but complimentary terms, the satisfaction of the board with her examination and her credentials, and expressing the hope that it would be agreeable to her to enter upon her duties on the following Monday. The writing was in a large, somewhat tremulous hand, and signed by Colonel Tomlinson as chairman of the board.

CHAPTER V

The teacher met no member of the school board between the day of her examination, which was Thursday, and the opening of the school on Monday, and she received no communication from any of them except a brief note from Mr. Cogburn, informing her of his reception of Captain Meacham's letter, and professing his readiness to carry out the Captain's wishes—a very short, dry, ill-written scrawl. She saw Colonel Tomlinson walking at a distance on the street, on Friday, and late Saturday afternoon she saw Mr. Huntley riding through the main street on Delta. But he did not look toward the window of her room where she sat, and to say the truth, she observed little of him except the large, sharp-rowelled spurs he wore, her attention being drawn almost wholly to the beauty and grace of the mare.

She walked through the village in one direction on Friday, and in another on Saturday. She found the streets rough and neglected, with many stones heaped together in some places, and worn into mud-holes in others. The sidewalks were unpaved except in front of stores, and not always there, and the best paving was of bricks irregularly laid, or else unhewn and poorly fitted slabs of granite. Some of the residences on the outskirts were large and apparently comfortable, but the architecture was stiff, square, and monotonous. There was no ornament on store or dwell-

ing, not a bow-window, or a gambrel roof, or turret, or cupola, or even a hip-roof anywhere. Every structure, except five or six stores, was of wood, and scarcely one appeared to have been painted within twenty years. The outbuildings were small and rough, and a good many of them crazy. The fences were generally dilapidated. Cows and hogs roamed at will through the streets, and the latter had some of their wallows close against the sidewalks, just out of the beaten way. She met a good many negroes, the women being generally very dowdy, and the men and boys mostly uncleanly and wretchedly clad. She also met a good many whites, the men and boys generally fairly well clothed, and they always gave her the inside of the walk. They almost always gave her a pretty full stare, but not a rude or familiar one. The women and girls were much better dressed, and the latter stared steadily at her. The former generally gave a single glance, gathered up their skirts, looked another way, and gave a very wide berth in passing—just as her friend Agnes Meacham had written. Of course all the adult residents in this village knew who she was. Mrs. Anderson and her husband were courteous to her, but of course they had no occasion to be either friendly or unfriendly.

She received the keys of the academy Thursday afternoon with the note announcing the decision of the trustees. On Friday morning she went there, and with the assistance of a small negro girl whom she hired on the street, swept and arranged the furniture. She found two or three cords of wood in one of the school-rooms,

ready for fire making, and a liberal supply of lightwood.

On Sunday morning she went to the Methodist church, a small, aged, wooden building, poorly furnished, having a long gallery on three sides and a small pulpit, and showing many cobwebs on the upper half of the narrow Gothic windows. She received stares from the men and boys loitering about the door, as she approached, but taking a seat pretty near the altar, she did not know whether the body of the congregation noticed her or not. Some aged ladies in the "amen corner" adjusted their spectacles and scanned her attentively when she took her place, but that was to be expected in any small village.

When they were dismissed a good many ladies and girls lingered in the two aisles chatting, and as she passed through the groups she received much scrutiny. But everywhere the way was promptly opened for her to pass, and she observed nothing but vague curiosity on any countenance. She did hear one deaf old lady say, "Well, she's mighty pretty, anyhow"; but this was the only expression she could by any means take to herself, and it, she thought, might have been applied to some one else. She was glad to see so many persons at this church, and so many going to and coming from the other churches, and so few persons standing or sitting on the streets. It was reassuring to be in a church-going community similar to that at home.

Thirty young people met Eleanor at the opening of the school, and a more heterogeneous gath-

ering could scarcely be imagined. There was the over-grown, slow, staring son of an ignorant farmer; there was the sickly, pampered, fretful daughter of another farmer; there was the son of a village preacher, and with all the mischief that usually characterizes a preacher's son; there was the son of a village shop-keeper, accustomed to loaf around the shop and hear all sorts of talk; there was the conceited daughter of a wealthier merchant, who imagined her father was a nabob, and herself a sort of princess; there was the prim village maiden of six or eight years, whose mother was a widow, and who, like her mother, thought she had to make up in exclusiveness and propriety what she lacked in money and mind; There were, finally, a crowd of children of blacksmiths, sewing-women, people with no regular employment and no certain income, the children of dead parents whose insolvency had thrown their offspring on the bounty of grandparents or sympathetic friends—almost all of them healthy, noisy, thoughtless and totally undisciplined, though usually warmer hearted and better tempered than the others. Eleanor met them all with a cordial greeting and a smile, and invited them to be seated in the main room, placing on the recitation benches as many of them as could be seated there, and distributing the others among the desks nearest her. Very few responded to her salutation. The most of them stared at her. This survey did her no harm, for she was a handsome woman, and well clad, and the pupils were evidently impressed by her manner of meeting them.

She proceeded to take their names, but not without some delay and questioning. The boys were troublesome enough with their "Jims" and "Jacks" and "Toms" and "Bills," but the girls were more so with their "Minnies," which stood for Mary, Marion, Martha, Margaret, and several other names beginning with M; their Matties, which included Martha, Matilda, Mabel, and one or two more; their Nannies, which included Ann, Annie, Nancy and others; to say nothing of the Pets, Pearls, Sissies, Doves, Chickens, and all sorts of cognomens so constantly applied to the little ones at home that they had, in some cases, forgotten their baptismal names. One small boy gave his name as "Plug." When questioned he stated that everybody called him "Plug Ugly." His name proved to be Richard Baxter. Another, who gave his name as "Pole," was forced by his comrades to acknowledge himself to be named "Napoleon Bonaparte."

However, she succeeded at last in putting all of them on the list. But then came the difficulty of arranging them in classes. Of course this could not be satisfactorily accomplished the first day, but even a temporary classing was found to be attended with much trouble. She had serious doubts all along, and these were much increased, and in no case solved, by the grumbling of these free-spoken youngsters. One howled that he had "nuvver been put in a class with Jane Swiggins"; another boy snarled that "Sim Thompson couldn't study alongside of him"; a tall, dough-faced girl protested that the last teacher "never thought

once of letting Julia Montgomery go into her class"; a sharp-featured, black-eyed lad of twelve years giggled at the idea of "old Pole Timmons" studying the same books with himself; and not a few girls threw up their heads and looked aside scornfully when it was proposed that they should work with certain other girls or certain boys. Eleanor almost lost her temper when the dissatisfaction became so general, and said, with some sternness, "You will go into the classes to which I assign you. If I find—as I expect to do in some cases—that my arrangement is imperfect, I shall be quite as ready as you can desire to correct it. But you will study where I put you. Come here, Martha Jones, and take your seat." This was spoken to the tall, scornful girl. Martha flushed, for once in her life seeing an issue offered her; but after a moment's pause she submitted. The rest were wise enough to see that the chief recalcitrant had been selected, and therefore that none could expect his or her protests to be regarded. One uncleanly, heavy-limbed boy, with a huge mouth, low forehead, and small greenish eyes, declined positively to take a place in any class, giving as his reason that "Mr. Jackson"—the last teacher—"had allers heerd him say his lessons by himself"—as another boy interpreted the little savage's mutterings to Eleanor, who could not distinguish what he said. She informed him that he could go home and stay there until she had taken the decision of the trustees. The other boys grinned while the little rebel picked up a fearfully battered spelling-book and a dog-eared "reader" and went away. One boy whispered to

another, loud enough for Eleanor to hear, "Mr. Huntley'll see attar him!"—from which she inferred that Mr. Huntley was no friend to rude, stupid boys.

At last the motley crew were arranged, except one little tot of a girl, apparently six or seven years of age, who had been half-crying all the time, and finally broke down completely when the Martin boy was sent home. She sobbingly gave her name as "Mi-hi-hi-nie Ha-ha-hax-well"—Minnie Haxwell. This tender thing Eleanor took by the hand and kept with her till the school was dismissed. The teacher assigned lessons in their old textbooks, told them to be present at roll-call at nine o'clock the next morning, closed the doors and windows, and, taking Minnie with her, walked back to the hotel at twelve o'clock.

Minnie parted from her quite happy, and put her little arms around the teacher's neck as they kissed each other good-by.

But there arose, on this first day, a controversy over school hours. Eleanor announced that, while it was not material to herself, she decided to open at nine o'clock in the forenoon and close at two o'clock in the afternoon, allowing one recess of twenty minutes to the whole school, at half past eleven, and such other recesses of ten minutes each to the younger pupils as their needs should appear to demand. She asked no child's opinion, nor the opinion of any patron. The pupils, however, soon indicated that the arrangement suited them, for it had been the custom to open at half-past eight, hold through to twelve, then resume

at two o'clock and continue till five—six hours and a half in all against five hours appointed by Eleanor.

The next morning she received a dozen notes from parents, some quite polite, some not exactly so, some written in fair hand, some in scrawls difficult to decipher, some correctly spelled, some containing fearful mutilations of the most common words, but all agreeing in protesting against the proposed innovation on a time-honored usage. As twelve letters represented fourteen pupils, and the silent patrons sixteen, she took it that a bare majority were with her. She saw that she had, in the expressive language of the day, "gone too fast." She adopted the regulation of the schools she had attended without suspecting that it was otherwise in this backwoods village. But once shown that the custom here had been different, her knowledge of the intense conservatism of the people caused her to pause. It would be folly to raise war at the very outset over a matter that involved no serious principle. But having a very positive idea on the subject, and having taken a position which some patrons approved, she declined to recede on her own motion. She therefore announced that she would continue the schedule already announced, until she received the direction of the trustees, and that she would at once call upon them to decide; and she wrote this decision to each one of the patrons who had written her.

When the three trustees met her in the hotel parlor, on the afternoon of the following day, she handed them the notes she had received, and asked instructions. Colonel Tomlinson, being an

advocate of holidays and taking life easy, was not averse to her plan, his only difficulty being the dreadful precedent that might be established in departing from the usages of old times. Mr. Cogburn snapped his eyes and sniffed his words, and talked all around the question, but finally declared for the old schedule. Mr. Huntley spoke plainly and positively in favor of the hours Eleanor had announced, hooting at the idea of children performing intellectual labor for six hours or more in a day, declaring that much active exertion was a trial even to a mature mind accustomed to study, and ascribing to the long confinement usual in schools much of the apathy and inertness of the average pupil and much of the delicate health of the more studious ones.

"Why," interrupted Mr. Cogburn with some energy, "everybody went to school six or seven or eight hours a day, in old times!"

"To be sure," responded Huntley. "And that was one of the causes of their learning so little. Behold the fruits of all-day schooling in these notes before you. They are written, almost wholly by women and men of intelligence, every one of whom went to school for years; yet here is hours spelt h-o-w-e-r-s; here is Miss Field's name spelt F-e-e-l; here is the N in Nancy, and a signature at that, printed wrong end foremost," and he showed the signature.

This from one of his decision and universally recognized industry and scholarship carried the day. As soon as a decision was rendered, Huntley walked out of the room, saying, "Miss Field, I think we shall have no further trouble about

this matter. But if any one complains, refer him or her to me as responsible for everything involved in the arrangement."

So everything was arranged, and not a pupil left the school except the rickety small son of the lady who printed her name with a reversed N.

• The children had been illy taught, and they gave evidence of having been laxly disciplined at home. It was therefore difficult for them to continue the studies to which they had heretofore been advanced, and it was more difficult to prevail upon them to study with attention and care. Their brightness and their independence of thought were most agreeable to the teacher, but their want of accuracy was distressing beyond measure. In some instances their deplorable ignorance of all that preceded what he or she was now studying forced Eleanor to put such a one into a lower class; but such action always appeared to the child to be a degradation, and consequently, she often felt compelled by her regard for the little one's feelings to carry him or her forward, heavy as was the burthen upon herself. These efforts were not generally appreciated, for the children seemed to regard a teacher as a hireling, without feeling, without any sense of duty, and without any but the smallest personal rights. There was rarely any sign of any one of them recognizing the dignity of her office. It would probably have been somewhat different with a teacher of their own section, for such a one would not have encountered the odium of being a "Yankee" adventuress seeking only her good, as was more than once said of her among the

children, in one form of words or another, when they thought she could not hear them. But for her there was the threefold task—of teaching badly taught children, of teaching children who were not controlled at home, and of teaching children who were filled with prejudice against her, personally. And she had no help. The trustees were polite to her, and the chairman and Mr. Cogburn were profuse in their offers to assist her as much as they could; but even by these wordy gentlemen she was given to understand that she must work her own way. They gave her practically unlimited authority; having so done, they intended to leave her to pursue her own course and assume all responsibilities. The public was silent. No voice intimated approval or disapproval. A murmur from some parent or guardian occasionally reached her through the pupils, but never a word or a hint of commendation.

She did not make the acquaintance of a single patron of the school except Mr. Cogburn, who sent a negative daughter of ten years and a fat boy about two years younger. The father sniffed out, now and then, that it was very well, but did not say anything definite. His wife did not call upon her, nor did Mrs. Tomlinson. Huntley was unmarried, and, living two miles away from the village, was seldom there.

Outside of the school-room she had next to no acquaintance with the pupils. The boys doffed their hats when they met her on the street, and the girls murmured her name in a monotonous tone when they came close to her. But not one of either sex ever came to visit her or joined, or

indicated a disposition to join her in her solitary walks. It seldom happened that any one recognized her at all when separated from her a distance of thirty or forty feet, though the boys hallooed at their comrades a hundred yards away and the girls screamed at their cronies across all the streets of the village. Timid little Minnie Haxwell once gave her an early jonquil she had found in her mother's yard, but this was the single attention volunteered on the part of her pupils.

At the expiration of the first calendar month, though less than three weeks had passed since the opening of the school, Colonel Tomlinson, as chairman of the board of trustees, sent her a month's salary. She wrote a reply, returning one-fourth of it and reminding him that she had served barely three school weeks. In a few hours that gentleman returned to her, by Mr. Cogburn, the ten dollars, and wrote to inform her that "the board, in the exercise of the functions imposed upon them by the charter of the academy and the established usages of many years, could not recognize any fraction of a month"; that "the books of account had already been made up for the month of January, and could not be corrected"; and that "Miss Field would oblige the board by sending by Mr. Cogburn a receipt for forty dollars, in order to enable the board to vouch its account." Mr. Cogburn told her that no other response to this grandiloquence would be entertained than the receipt demanded—which was sent at once. It certainly was all a matter of business—liberal business, of course, but only business.

CHAPTER VI

It now became clear to Eleanor that her salary would not warrant her continued stay at the hotel, where her board cost twenty-five dollars per month. It was painful to think of making a change, for lonely as her life was there, she was kindly treated by the proprietor and his wife, and she enjoyed a freedom scarcely to be expected elsewhere. And where else was she to go? She could not rent a room and live on bread and cheese, and certainly she could not do her own cooking. But what decent family would receive her? It was not likely that those who had so studiously avoided even an admission of her existence would consent to have her live with them, and she would rather go to the alms-house than live in a family of such base people as would receive her merely for the little money she could pay them. And what sort of intercourse could she expect with any family in a community which, without exception, had set its face against her? She thought she would hardly be insulted; but her experience so far had led her to expect from any forced connection with a family a misery scarcely less horrible than that which the tyrant Mazentius inflicted on his victims by chaining them to the dead bodies of men—to which, by the way, St. Paul perhaps refers when he speaks of "the body of this death."

In her distress she wrote to Captain Meacham. The next mail brought a letter from the Captain

himself, in which she was told to apply to Mr. Cogburn, and show him the letter. The Captain's letter was couched in very courteous terms toward both herself and Mr. Cogburn, and appeared to assume that his friend Mr. Cogburn would not hesitate to assist Miss Field in procuring a comfortable and thoroughly respectable boarding-house. But there was a slip of paper, enclosed with the letter, for Eleanor's sole perusal, and it contained these words: "Have no fear of Mr. Cogburn's refusing to help you in this matter. Go to him at once, if you have any confidence in my judgment." This sounded a little mysterious, but she acted immediately on the injunction. She had already spoken with Mrs. Anderson, and that lady, after a languid expression of regret in losing her, had suggested that she might be comfortably lodged, nearer the academy, with Mrs. Haxwell, the widowed mother of timid little Minnie. Mrs. Anderson stated that she had barely a speaking acquaintance with Mrs. Haxwell, but said that, though a very plain and very poor woman, she had a neat cottage and was considered quite respectable.

Mr. Cogburn blinked his ferret eyes a good deal over Captain Meacham's letter, and fingered it no little with his blunt, awkward digits while he "hum-m-d!" and "aha-ed" and talked generalities. But when Eleanor, after waiting in vain for any definite expression, mentioned Mrs. Haxwell, the merchant seized upon the idea with ardor, declaring that it was very strange that he had not thought of her before, and protesting that she was the "best sort of a woman," and boarded people at

fifteen dollars per month, including lights, fuel, and winter washing. This last item he explained by saying that it related to the laundering of such clothing as women usually wear in winter, a higher price being charged in summer. Then he scribbled a short note and handed it, in an open envelope, to Eleanor, to be delivered to the lady under discussion. Eleanor desired him to seal the envelope, as she declined to read what he had written, and desired that Mrs. Haxwell should have no ground for suspecting that she had read it. He made a pretense of having to return to his desk, to seal it "straight," but she saw that he added two or three lines to the note.

Then she called upon Mrs. Haxwell. The cottage was cozily located among large oaks, and the premises, though lacking the flowers, grass plots, shrubbery and graveled walks common to New England village homes, were neat and in fair repair. The floors of the house were clean and white, and so were the walls and ceilings. There was only a well-worn cheap carpet in the parlor, without a rug, and there was no carpet nor matting in the passageway. The furniture was common, rather battered, and certainly old. It was plainly a poor widow's house, but it looked as if it might be comfortable enough in this warm climate.

Minnie answered the teacher's rap at the open front door, and received her with a shy but pleased air, and invited her into the faded parlor. Very soon a short, stout, black-haired woman walked slowly into the room, so slowly indeed as to get a thorough stare at the visitor before reaching her.

Eleanor bowed and handed her Mr. Cogburn's note, saying, as she did so, that it would explain the object of her visit. The woman read it with evident difficulty and a good many returns to the first words of the communication.

After a few questions as to Miss Field's preference of the location of a room, her hours for rising and eating, her health, her antecedents, some remarks on the weather, and a scattering disquisition on teaching, politics, and some other things having no connection with an application for board—all spoken in very bad English—Mrs. Haxwell concluded that she might take the teacher for a month or two, or perhaps longer if the teacher could put up with "poor folk's" fare and with such other things as could be provided and arranged by a "widder" who had not long recovered from a "spell o' yaller janders," "neuralzy" and chills, and who was a chronic sufferer from a "misery in her head." The lady was so gracious as to promise to do her best for one to whom Minnie had "tuck sich a likin'," and of whom Minnie talked "so powerful much." The rate proposed was fifteen dollars a month, and Eleanor, rather faint and troubled, agreed to take her chances at the cottage. So she moved her effects that afternoon to the new home, and entered at once upon the experiment.

She expected little comfort, and she forced herself to find an excuse for every unpleasantness she encountered. But she soon saw that her calculations had not embraced half of the disagreeable features of the situation. Mrs. Haxwell was

an industrious woman, doing five times as much work as was done by her black untidy help, a girl of about twelve years of age, whom she invariably called "that nigger Polly"; she was neat in her person, about her table, and in her kitchen, and had a positive mania for sweeping and scouring floors; she was good-natured in the main, except with "that nigger Polly"; she spoke politely and always virtuously; her shortcomings consisted in calling Polly "a heifer" or "a fool" when she thought her boarder could not hear; and she was careful to keep her little daughter in modest and kindly deportment. But she was fearfully ignorant, dominated by prejudices, ungraceful in all her movements and in her speech; her fare was coarse, consisting mostly of fried bacon, tough, half-cooked biscuits, sobby corn bread, muddy coffee, rank collards, and butter which might have been churned at any time before the current year; she started at work before daylight with a clamor that put an end to all sleep, had breakfast by the time the sun rose, dinner at twelve, and supper at sunset; she seldom had a comfortable fire from the green wood which she burned because it was cheap, and never had a good light from her ill-kept coal-oil lamps; she talked mostly of her "ailments" and those of the neighborhood, going often into details that would affect the gorge of a professional nurse; and hinted much concerning the improper lives and motives of her neighbors; and she never once responded to a thought or sentiment of her guest beyond the commonest affairs of human life.

Eleanor fought on bravely. She never com-

plained, she wrote cheerful letters home, she worked hard at school, she took long walks for her health: yet she soon found herself dyspeptic, her sleep brief and restless, her dreams distressing, her whole spiritual nature drooping and deranged. Many a night she went to her bed weary, nervous and despairing. Sometimes she felt as if she must shriek aloud her agony. Once or twice she closed her eyes at night with the hope that death would relieve her before the next rising of the sun.

One Sunday she went to religious service when scarcely able to walk. There was no Episcopal church in the village, but once in every month a clergyman of that denomination officiated in the afternoon at the Methodist church. There was but a small attendance, and therefore she sought a pew near the chancel, with the feeling that those who participated in the exercises ought to be close to the minister and to one another. As she was about to enter an open pew the sight of mud and bread-crumbs on the floor caused her to hesitate. Then a tall, slender woman sitting in the pew back moved from the end where she sat, and by a movement of her head invited the teacher to sit beside her. Eleanor had forgotten her prayer-book, and the same lady handed her one just as the minister appeared.

At the farther end of the pew sat William Huntley, grave and thoughtful, always following the service, yet never opening his lips. Once or twice the lady glanced at him, but he turned his eyes neither to the right nor the left, nor indicated any feeling, except once, when the choir blundered

for a bar or two in their singing. Then he slightly shrugged his shoulders, but did not change countenance.

The sermon was long and very dry, yet Eleanor experienced a feeling of repose and a sense of comfort not common with her in those days. While the minister droned out his platitudes, and the congregation sat still and drowsy, she inhaled the soft air that breathed through the open windows, and listened to the twitter of birds among the trees and tombs of the churchyard, and caught glimpses of white clouds slowly floating across the deep blue sky. It was for her a day of rest.

At the conclusion of the service she returned to her neighbor the book she had given her, with a few words of thanks. The lady looked at her face for a moment, and then replied, with a smile, that she had seen the stranger without a book, and had herself one to spare. Huntley reached the aisle by this time, and bowed to Eleanor, calling her by name. Eleanor preceded them out of the church, and betook herself to the graveyard, which she had visited several times before, and in which she always found a sort of melancholy satisfaction—the dead of nearly two centuries had no word or look of reproach for her, but received her as they did all others.

Here Mrs. Anderson joined her, and inquired, with an appearance of interest, after her health. As she did so, Eleanor saw the lady who had sat with her walk into the street, attended by Huntley. A carriage met her, but she seemed to give some directions to the driver, indicating that she

did not propose to ride just then. Then she and Huntley walked away, the carriage following them. Eleanor asked the name of the lady.

"Oh, that is Miss Mason—Miss Margaret Mason—Mr. Huntley's cousin. Isn't she beautiful?"

"I think so," answered Eleanor. "I never saw anything more lovely than her deep blue-gray eyes and her classic face."

"She is admitted to be the beauty of the county," said Mrs. Anderson, "and she is as good as she looks. She is well suited to be the wife of Mr. Huntley."

"They are to be married then?" inquired Eleanor.

"Oh, yes; everybody expects it to come off very soon."

"I should say," returned Eleanor, fervently, "that she is worthy of any man in the world."

As they returned by the door they discovered Colonel Tomlinson holding an enormous prayer-book in his hands, which looked old enough to have served all the generations of Tomlinsons since Edward VI. He was talking loftily to several ladies, one of whom, Mrs. Anderson whispered to Eleanor, was his wife. He lifted his silk hat to the two, and even condescended to call their names; but at once resumed his discourse to his immediate companions. Mrs. Anderson accompanied Eleanor to Mrs. Haxwell's gate, and talked very pleasantly. At parting she advised the young stranger to take care of her health, looking rather wistfully at her as she spoke.

Mrs. Haxwell received a new lodger, soon after Eleanor went to board with her, in one Jacob Haxwell, the son, as the lady described him, "of her own dear brother Jake." Jake was not vicious, but he had the misfortune to say and do everything in the most awkward and rude fashion. If he handed one anything he thrust it against the recipient with a force that threatened to push him down; if he spoke it was as if he was howling at some one half a mile away; when he laughed he made the rafters shake; when he walked every pillar under the house trembled. Minnie stood in absolute terror of him, the cats left any room he entered. He ate like a famished hound, he broke many pieces of glass and crockery; he now and then twisted the legs off the chair he sat on, he tore his clothes every day, he fell up and down the steps to the house, and when it would be imagined that sleep had confined his boisterous energies for a season he filled the house with snores that would have done credit to an elephant. Polly was Jack's favorite diversion, and he her peculiar abomination. He teased her as much as he did the cats; he stumbled against her in walking, he removed out of her reach everything she was to handle, he called her to his aunt a thousand times when she was not wanted, he spilled water on her great feet, he shied stones around her when she was out of doors, he had something to say whenever she was present and, when compelled to desist from other aggressions, made faces at her. Eleanor once overheard her muttering, "I wish Miss Hax'll 'uld send dat despisable Jake to de country or to de debble, I doan' keer which!"

Jake was sent to school. Then Eleanor enjoyed a new taste of his genius. He went to sleep as soon as he was stopped from pinching other boys, he never learned a lesson, he made hideous faces at the girls, he had several fights (in which he was invariably worsted, for he was very slow and clumsy), he threw stones all the way between home and the academy, he made more noise at recess than any five of the pupils, he caught flies and stuck them on pins on his desk, he did everything that could annoy and disgust decent people. He did not ostracise Eleanor; he did worse. He spoke the word "Yankee" to her forty times a day. This was done chiefly in asking questions, such as— "How many soldiers wuz thar in the Yankee army?" "Does the Yankees eat collards?" "Does they have to lick Yankee boys at school much?" But he admired Eleanor greatly and once quite startled her at the table by bawling, "Is any of the other Yankee women as purty as you is?" And, to do him justice, he volunteered to run errands for her repeatedly, and several times carried fire-wood to her room without suggestion from any one. She sympathized with the rough boy, and used her utmost efforts to tame and civilize him; but his noisiness and awkwardness and gluttony and untidiness kept her in a constant worry.

She needed nothing more than Jake to wear her down. After a few weeks, she scarcely ate at all, slept little, and found difficulty in walking to and from the academy; her work exhausted her strength, and there and everywhere, and at all times, a terrible depression of spirits weighed

upon her. At last, in the middle of the week, she was unable to rise in the morning, and when little Minnie came to her room to notify her that breakfast was ready, she sent word by her that she would remain in bed that day, and desired no food. Mrs. Haxwell came directly, with many questions and coarse expressions of sympathy. A message was then dispatched by Jake to the school, to the effect that the teacher would not come that day. Her landlady, after two or three visits to her room, suggested that she had best send for a physician, as she had symptoms of fever. Eleanor soon gave her assent, for every uncomfortable sensation was on the increase, and there was added a strange uncertainty of vision and disconnectedness of thought.

Dr. Thompson was soon announced. He was no man of science, it seemed, but quickly showed that he possessed a practical judgment which was likely to prove more efficient than any mere theoretical attainments. As long as Mrs. Haxwell lingered in the room—as the really good-natured woman did from interest in the pale, weary teacher—he spoke in general and cheerful terms. But when she was suddenly called away by the sound of falling pots and pans in Polly's domain, he spoke plainly.

"You suffer from mental anxiety," said he, "and much of your nervous debility is owing to that cause. I know of no immediate remedy for such a disorder, if there be one; but I see plainly that the one physical derangement to be reached is dyspepsia. That has been produced mainly by the food you live on. Bacon and collards—espe-

cially fried bacon—together with raw biscuits and muddy, stale coffee are murdering hundreds of our people. Your system, unaccustomed to such diet, and subjected to the prostrating influence of the warm climate of the South, has been unable to stand it. You must change your boarding-house, and go where you can have wholesome bread and tea or milk, with butter that has been churned since Noah went into the ark, and an occasional egg."

"But where shall I find such a house?"

"I can't say," returned the doctor, with a little nervousness. "But if you can't find it, you must make up your mind to go either to your home or to the graveyard."

"I had no idea that my case was so desperate as that," said Eleanor, faintly.

"Of course not," said he; "but you have been stuffing yourself with what is poison to your system, and you have not noticed the gradual wear of it. I give you two simple prescriptions, which will relieve you from the nausea and giddiness temporarily; and I shall put you on a tonic to-morrow; but you will not be well so long as you use this fare. Mrs. Haxwell does all she knows; but you can't stand it."

Then, hearing the rap of that lady on the door he took his leave, and told her in passing out that he happened to have a brood of "fall" chickens at home, one of which he would send her, to make a soup for the patient.

"I'm mighty glad," responded the simple woman. "I was a-thinkin' of chicken soup for

Miss Eleanor; but I didn't have nary chicken 'cept that old red rooster what 'pears to have the pip, or somethin'."

CHAPTER VII

But neither medicine nor chicken soup will cure in a day, or in several days, a body diseased by weeks of living on indigestible food and reduced by mental overwork and distress. So although Eleanor Field suffered less pain on the second day of her illness, she was so debilitated as to be less capable of exertion than at the beginning of the attack; and that debility took possession of her mind. She did not become delirious; but she occasionally passed hours of which she had no distinct recollection afterward, and often, while engaged in conversation with the physician or her landlady, she found herself wandering into a realm very different from the little room in which she lay. She clung to life with something of her former tenacity, for even in the midst of her temporary aberrations she retained some thought of the duties devolved upon her and some portion of that courage which had carried her thus far and scorned defeat. But once or twice, during these periods of syncope, her body grew so cold and her heart so still that the medical attendant himself feared she was dying. On waking from one of these spells she found the physician injecting brandy into her arm, and Mrs. Haxwell chafing her feet in an agony of nervous excitement.

On the third day she slept almost continuously for hours. When she woke in the afternoon she became aware of a new figure in the room—that of a young woman, who moved noiselessly from

place to place, and occasionally looked toward the bed. She studied that face and that figure with the quiet interest which one feels in the gradual disclosure of some entirely new phenomenon. Her first thought was that this person was not Mrs. Haxwell, her second that it was a handsome woman tastefully dressed, her third that it was some one who had nerves and could appreciate the feelings of others.

"You are—" began Eleanor.

"Margaret Mason," replied the visitor, in a composed and cheerful voice. "Do you think you would like some ice?" And she proceeded to crack ice and hand it to the sick woman in a small glass dish, for which she smoothed a level place on the mattress and within easy reach.

After allaying her feverish thirst, Eleanor turned her eyes to the stranger sitting silent beside her. She could see only her profile and the contour of her head, throat and shoulders; but all these were so perfectly modeled and so symmetrical that in their repose they seemed to be only clothed statuary. She began to doubt her senses, and feared she was the victim of a sick person's vision. So she rallied and spoke.

"How did you come here?" she inquired.

"In my carriage," replied the lady quietly, as if it were the most everyday question possible. "I drove from home about two hours ago. As I came along the road I gathered some fine wild violets. Some of them are yonder on that table. I had quite a bunch of them when I returned to the carriage; but a young horse I was driving took fright and started as I stepped into the car-

riage, and I dropped more than half of them. And before the driver could stop, the wheel on that side had passed over the dropped blossoms and crushed them out of all shape. That was a worry, was it not? Do you like horses?" All this was spoken in a low, gentle tone, and while the lady folded and unfolded her handkerchief, as if thinking only of the violets and the horses.

"I was reared in the country," responded Eleanor, feebly; "and I take much pleasure in riding and driving."

"Then," pursued Margaret Mason, with an air of enjoyment, though still speaking slowly and gently, "you will understand how I was worried with that young, fretful horse. Mamma told me not to trust him; but I have ridden him so often, and he seemed so intelligent, that I concluded to try him. But he is a thoroughbred, and you know they seldom make steady draft animals."

"You were not hurt, I hope," said Eleanor.

"Oh, no, for old John is a fine coachman. You have been in that wood, perhaps. It is the one that lies not far beyond the Methodist church where I first saw you, and is the finest forest near town."

"Ah, yes!" sighed Eleanor as there arose the recollection of many hours spent there in the balmy afternoons. "It is a noble forest."

"Well," continued Miss Mason, after a brief pause, "as I said, I brought some of those large-eyed children of the forest. Here they are," and she showed the patient a cluster of violets looking over the rim of a small vase. She did not submit them to her touch, but placed the vase on a

bracket on the wall, where the light of the setting sun showed them plainly.

"You know," she continued, "that these products of the woods have no perceptible odor. They cannot, therefore, cause the nausea which the cultivated violet often produces. I never allow those violets in my bed-chamber."

Eleanor lay silent, lost in dreamy enjoyment, watching the flowers in the golden light and listening to the gentle voice. This reverie was soon broken by a sharp rap at the door, and on Margaret Mason's opening it, Dr. Thompson entered. Margaret went to one of the windows that looked upon the street while he examined the patient. The examination concluded, he said nothing to the patient, but went to her visitor and spoke for three or four minutes in a low tone. The first words Eleanor heard were Margaret's. "I understand, Doctor, and I will see that all is done as you direct."

"Rest and bracing up is what we need now," cried the doctor, speaking to Eleanor in a sprightly voice. "Miss Mason knows all about it. I shall be here pretty early in the morning. In the mean time, Miss Mason has charge of everything."

"I thank God!" exclaimed the sick girl, weeping.

"Oh no, dear!" cried Margaret, hurrying to her and taking one of her hands. "There's no need to trouble yourself. You must just endure my chat and ways of doing. Have some ice—" and she thrust her patient's fingers into the dish she held.

The physician talked a little about the violets, referred to the fine air, impressed it upon Eleanor that she must make known to her nurse every pain and every wish, and concluded by predicting that "we" should be "all right" in a day or two, and went out of the room. Margaret Mason followed him.

In a few minutes she returned, holding in her hand a wine-glass, which she offered to Eleanor. "Take this. It is some sherry which you are to drink." Eleanor swallowed it without a word. In another minute Mrs. Haxwell came in bearing a tray in her hands, and after asking "if there was anything more," prepared to go. Margaret stopped her, put her hands on Eleanor's shoulders, raised her, and with the landlady's assistance placed two or three pillows at her back.

"Now," said Margaret, very quietly but in a tone which indicated that she must be obeyed, "here is a soft-boiled egg, seasoned for you. Take it—" and proceeded to put it to Eleanor's lips, to drink. It was so fluid that a single swallow disposed of it.

"Now," continued her nurse, "I put this tray at your side. It has a plate of roasted Irish potatoes, salted and peppered and buttered for use. Here is also a bit of toast, dry but with a little butter on it. You are to eat these things at your convenience. When you have eaten them and rested a little I shall come and talk to you." She smiled very brightly as she spoke, and then carried Mrs. Haxwell with her out of the room. It was not long before her orders were obeyed, and Eleanor found herself resting in ease—almost in comfort.

Just after dark a small lamp, much shaded, was brought in by Mrs. Haxwell. Eleanor inquired about Miss Mason, and was informed that she was expected every minute.

"Then she is not here," suggested Eleanor, feebly, and all hope seemed to have passed away.

Mrs. Haxwell replied that she had ridden home immediately after the food had been served, but stated that she would return for the night. The landlady added that she herself was not so well after sitting up last night—of which Eleanor had not known before—and would therefore take rest, ready, however, to answer any call Miss Mason should make. And she went on to say that Jake had been sent to visit his family, leaving his room, which opened into the sick-room, for Miss Mason's use that night. It was not possible for the stranger to realize all that these words implied, but she had recovered intelligence sufficient to gather in a general way that she had been very ill for twenty-four hours or longer, and that she still required a good deal of attention. She attempted an apology for giving so much trouble; but Mrs. Haxwell bade her give herself no worry, as no one had been "put out" by it. Presently the noise of horses' feet and wheels came in from the street, and in a minute thereafter Margaret Mason entered. She threw off a light wrap, removed her hat and gloves, and exchanged some words with Mrs. Haxwell; then she carried the lamp and her own articles of apparel into the adjoining room, leaving the door open. Then came the sound of Polly's heavy feet in the hall; then the bang of some vessel in the other room, which

drew from Miss Mason the warning, "Be careful, Polly!" then Polly was heard carrying wood into that room and shuffling about the fire-place and talking to herself; and then Polly went away, saying, "Oh, thankee, mum. Much obleeged to you, mum."

Eleanor now saw a new light in that room, and heard the pouring of water. Then Miss Mason returned with the little lamp, closed the door, placed the lamp not far from the head of the bed, but where Eleanor could not see it, and coming to the bed laid her hand lightly on the sick girl's brow, without speaking. Eleanor could not repress her tears.

"You must not worry," said Margaret. "You must be very quiet and good to-night, unless you suffer pain or thirst. Do you need anything now? No? Then try to get a little sleep while I read a book I have brought with me." Then she took a seat close to the lamp and opened a small volume.

Eleanor turned her eyes toward the visitor. Weak and dazed as she was she could not but observe the beauty of the face and figure on which the lamp shed its mellow light. She saw a mass of dark chestnut hair lying above a broad, low forehead; a smooth, delicately proportioned face, a mouth at once expressive of resolution and sweetness, a chin that seemed the perfect complement of the other features, a slender throat, erect shoulders, and a bust whose outline seemed followed to a hair's-breadth by the dress of gray in which it was clothed. And as the reader progressed in her book the sick girl observed the taper fingers that turned the pages, and could also

see the polished nails as they rested now and then on the page about to be turned. How long this study of the watcher lasted Eleanor did not know, but she remembered afterward that she fell asleep before the figure left off reading, and that in her dreams there appeared a beautiful, pure face which always kept close about her, and that she heard a voice of surpassing melody speaking hope and peace.

Awaking from a disturbed dream she found Margaret Mason standing beside her and holding her hand.

"You have had an unquiet sleep for the last two or three minutes," said the latter quietly—"the result of weakness rather than fever, for your pulse, though quick, is thready and somewhat irregular. If you insist on a narcotic I will give it you, as I have a preparation here; but I would rather strengthen you with a sup of wine."

"Do as you like," murmured Eleanor, helplessly.

"The wine is old and mild—sherry of the kind which served you well this afternoon. I never like an opiate if it can be avoided."

She brought a tiny glass of wine, which Eleanor swallowed as quickly as her emotion permitted, for she was weeping. Margaret gave her her handkerchief, and took her hand, saying, "Now you will close your eyes and listen to a little legend of the early times of this section of the country."

With early morning, when came Margaret Mason, she found her patient awake. Eleanor now had a better view of her visitor than before; and

the bright glare of early day only disclosed a rarer beauty and a more graceful bearing than had been seen at the church or in the uncertain light of the previous night. There was but one thing now lacking about her—that delicate pink coloring which had shone on her cheeks. She was quite pale, so pale indeed as to excite in Eleanor, sick as she still was, a pang of self-reproach. Her first speech therefore was:

“I am so grateful to you; but so sorry to see that you are not entirely well.”

“Never mind about me,” returned Margaret, cheerfully. “I feel robust enough for any duty that may come my way. I see you are better.”

“Much better. I think I shall be able to get on my feet to-day.”

“No, no—at least not this morning. Lie where you are. In the afternoon I may let you sit by a window and take the air and watch the clouds; but you must promise not to attempt anything of the kind till I consent.”

“I am content to do your bidding.”

“Then you will soon be well,” cried Margaret, laughing. “But,” she went on, after a pause, “this is Sunday, you know, and after a bit I must go home and prepare for church. May I not write for you? Be frank now. You have some loved one at home, with whom you correspond. Have you a mother?”

“Yes, yes. Poor mother!” cried Eleanor, breaking down under the thought of that pale woman waiting for the letter already due at the far-off New England home.

“Now keep perfectly quiet while I write a short

letter," said Margaret in that tone of mingled gentleness and decision which seldom fails to control.

When she had finished the letter she asked the mother's name and address, being particular to have the county as well as the post-office. Then she said, "Let me read you what I have written."

"You need not," cried Eleanor, in a great burst of tears. "I know it is perfect. I will trust my life, my happiness—everything—in your hands."

Margaret passed her handkerchief over her own eyes for a moment, and then said gently, "I hope I am worthy of such confidence."

She rose, sealed the envelope, stamped it, closed the desk, and came to the bedside.

"Now," said she, "be very good while I am gone. Your breakfast will be here in a minute. Take this tiny cup of wine. Eat as you like; but be sure to eat something. *Au revoir*." Then she pressed Eleanor's hand, touched her forehead with her lips, and went away, carrying the letter in her hand.

About an hour before sunset, Eleanor was waked by the sound of something rolled across the floor. Looking in that direction she perceived a stout female figure surmounted by a white head-gear which towered aloft. When the thing on wheels had been moved to a window and the curtain lifted, she saw before her a portly, brown-faced woman, with a great, snowy head-handkerchief.

"Good day," said Eleanor.

"Howdye-do," responded the dark woman with a curtsy. "I hope you are doin' well."

"Thank you," said Eleanor. "I feel somewhat better."

"Yes 'm," replied the woman. "Miss Margaret sent me to fix these things fur you. An' you'll git up an' take some fresh air."

This person, though very smiling and quiet in her movements, was quite as positive as her employer, as Eleanor soon learned; for when she sought some explanation of affairs she was informed that she was to let the woman throw her wrapper around her and seat her at the window—with the additional information that she could talk as soon as she was moved and seated. No question proved of any avail whatever until these things were accomplished. But once at the window Eleanor insisted on a statement.

"Well now, Miss," began the woman, leaning against the foot of the bed and setting her hands on her hips, "I'm a-goin' to tell you. My name's Jane. Miss Margaret—that's my young Miss, her ma, Miss Caroline, bein' old Miss—she calls me 'Aunt Jane,' 'cause I nussed her when she was a baby, an' I been goin' 'long wid her ever sence. Miss Margaret says to me, jist before I went to church, 'You go to Miss Field d'rectly atter preachin'; an' you'll find my easy-cheer at her do'. You put dat cheer in her room, at de winder, and put her in dat cheer, and wait on her.'"

"Did she say anything else?" asked Eleanor, wistfully.

Jane straightened herself as she answered severely: "No, indeed. My young Miss knows as I knows what's to be done fer sick ladies. She nuvver put de insult on *me* of sayin' *I don't know*

all what's to be done. And you better know, honey, if young Miss don't do it dar ain't no other pusson what takes dat 'tority on *herself*!" Then she left the room and returned directly, Polly with her, bearing a silver waiter on which were served a cup of tea, a dish of butter, a plate of biscuits and another plate of broiled chicken. Jane took the tray, bade Polly "go 'long," muttering something about "bein' raised 'mong poor folks," and after some arrangement of the viands placed Eleanor's afternoon meal before her.

"I bri'led dat chicken myself, an' I made dem biscuits, an' so it's all right," observed she, and retired to the next room.

The meal concluded, Jane came back and gave Eleanor a small glass containing a milky fluid. On the latter's inquiring what it was the nurse merely stated that it was "peptun, or some sich name," which "young Miss" had given her to administer.

Then Jane seated herself on a low chair, and opened her mouth and spoke: "It's mighty sensible, Miss, for you to take yo' vittles an' wait a bit. Now I'm gwine to tell you. Young Miss come home sorter tired dis mornin', an' den she had to go to preachin'. An' when she come from preachin' she was mo' tired. So her ma she tells her to take a res', but she says you's got to be looked atter. An' den she says Aunt Jane mought look atter you. So I says, 'In course I can,' an' den I up an' says I'm not gwine to let young Miss wuk, an' me doin' nothin'. An' young Miss, she knows well enough dat when ole

Jane talks dat way she ain't gwine to be fooled wid. So young Miss—she a-knowin' I ain't gwine to stan' no foolishness—she says I can ride in de carriage—which it was comin' to fetch ole Miss to see Miss Talbert which was sick close here wid pneumony, which was ole Miss's friend. So Jane, you see, was to come to chu'ch wid ole Miss, and den come hyere. So I fixes up all my t'ings, an' seb'ral t'ings (you ain't got nothin' to do wid dem, in course), so as to come 'long wid ole Miss. Den me an' ole Miss got into de carriage—which you 'member we lef' young Miss at home lyin' down—an' dat's de way I come hyere fer to take charge of you an' gib you yo' commandments," and Aunt Jane shook for a minute in silent laughter. Eleanor was too feeble for arguments, or for explorations into the negro mind, so she simply awaited further disclosures.

"Now, den," resumed Aunt Jane, "I been come hyere wid de commandments. An' de fus' of dese is dat you is to eat somet'ing. You done eat. Den you is to git by de winder an' git de a'r an' look out. Now you have been dar. Den I got to say dat young Miss can't come here 'fo' to-morrow mornin'. An' den I got to take charge o' you, an' see dat you git all you wants, an' sleep in de room nex' you, an'—an' keep you straight till young Miss come in de mornin'."

"And what have I got to do?" Eleanor ventured to ask.

"You got to 'bey de commandments," answered Jane with decision.

"You seem to understand the case, Aunt Jane."

"In course I does; an' you ought to know dat."

"But you must remember, Aunt Jane, that I come from the North, where there are very few of your people; and therefore I don't know much about family servants."

"Dat's a fac', honey," returned the woman soothingly. "So I mus' tell you all 'bout it. Now me an' ole Miss was gals together, an' I allers waited on her. An' when young Miss come to be born, ole Miss says, 'Jane, hyere is your young Miss to wait on.' An' I says, 'Bless God, Miss Car'line, I gwine to stan' by dis gal.' An' ef I ain't done it, I like to see white or black dat can come up and say so," and Jane glared fiercely around the room, as if seeking such a malignant and false enemy.

"Well, den," resumed she, "I jist live all my life wid dem two—which Mars Julius, which was ole Miss's husband, died long ago, 'for' de war, a leavin' dem two by deyselves."

"They were comfortable, though," suggested Eleanor.

"Comfut-tub-ble!" echoed Jane, indignantly. "I should say dey *wuz* com-fut-tub-ble! Two hundred and sebenteen niggers—which I got de lis' in my trunk now—an' five tousen' acres o' land, an' hosses an' houses, an' ebberyt'ing beautiful, an' diamonds an'—well, Miss, you can't tell what dey had. Dey was rich—rich!"

"I beg your pardon, Aunt Jane," responded Eleanor, for she seemed to have hurt the old woman's feelings.

"Oh, you don't bodder 'bout pardon, honey. You come fum de Norf, an' you can't know 'bout

sich t'ings. You nuvver min'. I'll tell you de God's truff, an' den you'll know.

"Dey wuz comfortable!" resumed Aunt Jane, with a little acerbity still lingering in her tone. "Dey wuz de riches' fam'ly in dese parts. Colonel Tomlinson—him what you sees 'bout hyere, big, tall ole gentleman, wid long white haar an' a beaver hat—he wuz de nex' in riches. He had two hundred niggers an' a heap o' land, but he nuvver had de fine house an' de town property what my white folks had, 'dough I mus' say he had mighty fine hosses—which he's got one or two now as is as fine as any round about 'cept Mars William Huntley's black mar' an' dat bay hoss what young Miss is tryin' to break to de carriage, 'dough me an' her ma is always afeared he'll kill her yit. But Miss Marg'ret jis' gwine to do what she likes. An' brave! de Lord knows she ain't afeared o' nothin', fer all dat you see her so kin' an' good. De folks all makes a mighty 'miration when dey sees dat bay hoss a-cavortin' in de street. Ya, ya, ya!"

"And you have stayed with Mrs. Mason and Miss Margaret all the time?" inquired Eleanor.

"In course I is!" answered Jane, positively. "What I gwine to leave my folks fur? I jis' like to know how I kin leave my white folks. But bein' as how you comes fum de Norf, you can't tell 'bout dese t'ings. In course you can't! But you jis' lissen. My fam'ly been b'long to ole Miss's fam'ly more'n a hundred years. Slavery times an' freedom wan't no diff'unt to me. I got all de money I wants when I been a slave, an' git all I wants now. So I like fer somebody to tell

me de diff'unce. I ain't see no diff'unce 'cept in de chu'ch. I'm a Meffodis'; what is you, Miss Eleanor?"

"I'm an Episcopalian."

"Bless God!" exclaimed Jane, slapping one knee with energy. "Jis' de same as my white folks! An' you come fum so fur away, too! Who'd a b'lieved a Piskipalian would a' come right here to us? Well now, as I wuz a' sayin', in ole slavery times ole Miss—an' young Miss, too—made us house-servints go ebry Sunday mornin' to de Piskiple chu'ch. Atter dat we been gone whar we please in de evenin'—mostly to hear white or black preach in de Meffodis' chu'ch."

"Did they allow a colored man to preach in a church?" asked Eleanor, in surprise.

"In course dey did—when he wuz a good man. But you don't know. De white folks didn't have a cullud pusson to preach to dem, in course, no more'n what dey do now. But in de evenin' dar was no preachin' fur de white folks in de Meffodis' chu'ch, an' none in de Baptis'. So sometimes ole Uncle Tom Brown or ole Uncle Joe Waller—which dey wuz cullud—gin a sarmint at one chu'ch or de odder. But sence de war I been goin' to de sep'rate cullud Meffodis' chu'ch—dat is, I b'long dar. Only I does go now an' den wid ole Miss or young Miss, or boff, to the Piskipalian."

"Do you ever commune at the Episcopal church?"

"Dar you come to it!" cried Jane, rather nervously. "I 'bleeged to tell you, howsomever, I been dodge dat communion for 'bout a year—some time atter freedom. Fin'ly, young Miss tell

me one Sunday I got to commune as I done long time ago. I says to her, 'Miss Marg'ret,' says I, 'I ain't b'long to dat chu'ch no mo.' Says she, 'Dat don't make no diff'unce; ef you 'pent ob yo' sins an' 'sire to lead a new life, you kin jis' commune, pervided you been baptize, which you wuz, long ago.' Says I, 'What one lone nigger gwine to do 'bout communin'?' Says she, 'William's man Josh 'll be dar, to commune.' Dat was Mars William Huntley's nigger she was talkin' 'bout, what is his body-servant. . So she nuvver let me say anudder wu'd, but her an' ole Miss tuk me 'long, sittin' on de box wid de driver. Sho' 'nough, dar was Josh in de gallery when I got dar."

"So your Mars William had brought him?" remarked Eleanor.

"I reckon he did brung him!" returned Jane, scornfully. "Mars William ginully brings folks whar he wants to. He mighty good to Josh, an' give him more'n any nigger man gits 'roun' here, an' he'd shoot anybody what he caught a troublin' him. But Josh got to 'bey his commandments, I tell you! So dar was me an' Josh. Josh jis' look like a fool. You see neider of us been to communion dar fur—oh, a year or mo'. Atter while, long come communion. Lots o' people gone up an' commune—Piskipalians, Prissbyterians, Mef-fodis', all but de Baptis'. I hope my white folks done forgit. But I got sorter cu'ous when I see ole Miss an' young Miss a settin' in der pew, an' all de res' mostly gwine up, so I watch 'em boff; I sorter 'spicioned one of 'em mought be sick. Bimeby, all done commune, an' got away 'cep' ole

Miss and young Miss. Not a soul at de altar, or gwine up. I whisper to Josh, 'What kin be de matter?' Den ole Miss riz up an' young Miss riz up; an' den, bless yo' soul, young Miss tu'n to de gall'ry an' look me an' Josh plumb t'rough, an' hole up one finger—jis' a little, but I know what dat mean. So I loss all my strenk, an' I jis walk down out o' dat gall'ry—an' Josh, too, fer he ain't got no min' when he see young Miss look—an' down I went into de chu'ch. An' dar ole Miss an' young Miss wuz a waitin' an' lookin' at we two. So dem two went up to de right side of de altar, an' us two went up to de lef' side, an' we all kneel down an' take communion. An' bless God, when young Miss done broke me an' Josh in, dar ain't no mo' trouble—jis' like she ride a hoss onct, dat hoss is hern fum dat day on. So we two goes to communion dar when dey has it—tain't so offen—'bout three times in de year—an' dey always waits to de las', an ole Miss an' young Miss goes on de right and me an' Josh on de lef'. Praise de Lord!"

"Well," said Eleanor, who was taking a deep interest in the nurse's reminiscences, "it did you no harm."

"In cou'se it didn't. I'm pow'ful glad to keep 'long o' my white folks when I kin." Jane paused, and gazed out of the window meditatively.

The church bells began to chime for evening service, and lights began to glimmer in the neighboring houses. Jane lighted the two lamps in the room.

"Would you like to attend church this evening?" asked Eleanor.

"No, mum," replied Jane. "I wuz sent to nuss you, an' I gwine to do it. Shill I git yo' tea?"

Eleanor assented, and the old woman shuffled away. Little Minnie came in during Jane's absence, and talked about the day's Sunday-school and the children she met there. She was quite sympathetic, and when Eleanor mentioned the school, told her that the trustees had notified the pupils not to come until the following Wednesday. Mrs. Haxwell came later, giving as her excuse for absence during the afternoon, that after Jane came she knew her boarder could lack nothing. She asked pleasantly after Eleanor's health, placed on the mantel-piece a phial of medicine sent by the physician, and on hearing a second ringing of church bells took her leave, assuring Eleanor that she left everything in the hands of Jane, but would be glad to serve her whenever notified. Then Eleanor sat staring into the darkness and listening to a voice somewhere,—a soft and sweet voice,—singing "Nearer, my God, to thee."

CHAPTER VIII

Jane remained till Monday afternoon, then Miss Mason visited the patient for an hour or more, bringing with her a bouquet of hot-house flowers and several magazines. What else she brought Eleanor never fully knew; but afterward Minnie Haxwell hinted that packages of tea, fresh eggs, fresh butter, loaf sugar, delicate jellies, light bread, potatoes, hominy, grits, teacakes and other things were brought in the carriage, to say nothing of a small coop of chickens whose screams she herself heard when they were handed out by the coachman from his seat on the box. The physician came while the visitor was there, and assured her as well as his patient that the latter was convalescent, and would be able, after one more day of rest and recuperation, to resume her work at the school. When Margaret went away she took Jane with her.

The broiled chicken was not so good coming through Mrs. Haxwell's and Polly's hands as it had been; nor was the tea so aromatic as that she had when Margaret or Jane was in the house; nor was the toast particularly crisp; and as for boiled eggs, they now seemed to have been cooked exactly long enough to make the yolks wax. Yet she fared tolerably well till school opened, and indeed for the next two days. But when Friday came she felt her former trouble return, and on Friday night she was in misery.

The house was now in a clamor all day long.

Jake had returned, and bawled louder, and kicked over more furniture, and dropped more things than before. Polly's fingers seemed greased; she let fall almost everything she touched, and when her mistress scolded she filled the house with the vilest English and the most stupid excuses Eleanor had ever heard. Mrs. Haxwell, too, made up for lost time by screaming at Polly, berating Jake, shrieking the most unmelodious "hymn tunes," as she called them, and rattling and banging among the furniture and cooking utensils at a rate that would have disgraced Polly herself, and every meal seemed to be worse than any of its predecessors.

Eleanor despaired. She could not endure this state of affairs any longer. So on Saturday morning she handed Mr. Cogburn her resignation, and requested that it be acted upon at once. That ferret-eyed person hummed and "aha'd" a good deal, but ended by promising to communicate with his brother trustees during the day.

About three o'clock in the afternoon, when she had risen from a vain effort to sleep, Mrs. Haxwell gave her a note from the chairman, requesting her presence at the academy at half-past three o'clock. She hastened to comply, though walking with much difficulty.

There she found the three trustees. Colonel Tomlinson, loftily it is true, yet in a kindly tone, expressed their regret at receiving her communication, and inquired whether they could not, by some steps, prevail upon her to recall her resignation. He added that no one besides themselves was acquainted with even the existence of her

note. Huntley assented to all the Colonel said, and looked searchingly at Mr. Cogburn. That gentleman cleared his throat and indulged in two or three gutturals and aspirates.

"Come, Cogburn," said Huntley, rather sharply, "speak out, if you have anything to say."

Cogburn glanced at the stern face before him, and then said, "Well, I did tell my wife. But she won't talk about it."

"Mr. Cogburn," said the Colonel, with emphasis, "there are only three members of this board, and it has been understood among us that no member shall mention anything that is before the board until either it is disposed of or the board agrees to make it public."

"Well," returned Cogburn, "I suppose no harm can come of it. She won't talk."

"I wish as much could be said of her husband," said Huntley, coldly.

Eleanor interposed. "You have my resignation and I must be frank with you. You gentlemen have been kind to me; and I have no complaint of patrons or of pupils of the school. But I am ill. I cannot fulfill your wishes or my duty. I must abandon the undertaking. You know of the failure of my health; I need not mention more. My physician says again to-day that I must either go home or to your burial ground."

Colonel Tomlinson clasped and unclasped his hands as he looked on the pale, thin face of the teacher. Cogburn blinked and moved uneasily in his chair. Huntley put his hand to his brow and looked upon the floor.

"I regret that I have proved a disappointment

to you," continued Eleanor, after a brief pause, "and I shall insist on returning the salary I have received as well as foregoing any now due. But—"

"I beg your pardon," interrupted the Colonel, with some emotion, "but you must not mention such things to us. We won't hear them."

"Certainly not," agreed Huntley, gravely.

"But I must go," added Eleanor.

"Might I take the liberty to inquire," said the Colonel, "if your present residence has anything to do with your purpose to resign?"

"Yes," replied Eleanor, glancing toward the member who had told his wife. "Yes," said she, repeating the word. "To be plain, my health and, to some extent, my peace of mind have been ruined by the food and the noise and manners at my lodging-place. I admit that I should not have succumbed, at least so soon, if these had been my only troubles. But these have caused me to break down under what I might otherwise have borne. I say nothing against Mrs. Haxwell, but—"

"We understand," put in Huntley. "The single point is, that your health has failed under the fare you have, as your physician has announced professionally, and you therefore conclude to give up the school. But if your resignation is based wholly upon this fact, I presume a change of boarding-place might enable you to continue at least until the experiment is fully tried. Am I right?"

"Yes," replied Eleanor, though rather reluctantly. "But I do not know where I am to go. I could have lived pretty well at the hotel, but my

salary did not justify paying the rate charged there. Mrs. Haxwell's seemed to be the only other place. May I ask if you can tell me where I can be accommodated."

"No," returned Huntley; "but if it is once understood that you are willing to make a further trial, on changing your place of board, we should use our efforts to secure a new place for you; for I, and all of us, take it for granted that you would not traverse the village on a from-door-to-door expedition, in search of board."

"I agree fully with Mr. Huntley," said the chairman sententiously, "I should myself do my best for you."

Mr. Cogburn was rather obstinate. "I don't know where to look. I think Mrs. Haxwell's a good enough place."

"Mr. Cogburn," said Huntley, "are you aware that George Washington Haxwell, the husband of that lady, died of chronic dyspepsia? And do you forget that very soon after his death Dr. Thompson took the trouble to deliver a free public lecture on dietetics, inveighing against tough, heavy biscuits, raw corn bread, fried bacon and green collards, and referring so emphatically to even carpenters being murdered by such food, that many persons jokingly termed his lecture G. W. Haxwell's funeral sermon?"

"A carpenter can have dyspepsia, I suppose," retorted Mr. Cogburn.

"Yes, and so can a farmer, but I tell you that child Minnie, young sparrow as she is, is dyspeptic, if Dr. Thompson is any authority. Mrs. Haxwell, who was a very robust woman, a few

years ago, when she married and moved into the village, is complaining day and night of 'yaller janders,' 'neuralzy,' headaches and almost everything that follows unwholesome diet. In my opinion that bumpkin Jake has before him the fate to make the test whether any man, woman, or child can eat his aunt's cooking, and keep well."

Even Colonel Tomlinson's dignity could not resist these words, delivered as they were in the most solemn manner. Eleanor laughed outright.

"Well, I don't know where to go," persisted Mr. Cogburn. "Mrs. Haxwell's would be good enough for me."

"Perhaps it would," returned Huntley, dryly. "I am quite willing to admit that to be true. But you need have no trouble about this matter."

Then he moved that Miss Field's resignation be not accepted, but that she be requested to continue in her office. The motion was put and carried unanimously—that is, without dissent.

When the trustees rose to go, the Colonel told her that she might expect to hear from him or Mr. Huntley in the course of the afternoon—certainly by Monday. She desired to thank the latter for his energetic handling of her cause; but his formal bow and hasty departure prevented her.

Late in the afternoon Colonel Tomlinson came to Mrs. Haxwell's accompanied by a gentleman whom he introduced to Eleanor Field as William Williams, Esq., an attorney at law residing in Cherenden. Mr. Williams was of medium height, but was so exceedingly thin that he appeared taller. He had long sandy-colored hair, slightly

sprinkled with gray, his forehead was high and narrow, his eyes were very pale blue and close together, his nose high, arched and sharp, his lips thin and straight, his cheek-bones very prominent, his cheeks hollow, his chin pointed, his complexion pale yellow. He stood quite erect, and a nervous excitement seemed to pervade his fragile body. The Colonel described him as having been long at the bar, but now retired from active practice, to the—h'm—great regret of a host of clients and—er—that of many friends who had determined that he should—u'm—wear the judicial ermine before closing his—a—a—most useful professional career. After giving Mr. Williams time to make his bow, and Eleanor to acknowledge his presence and her hearing of the encomiums pronounced upon him, the Colonel proceeded to inform her that he thought—he trusted—Mr. Williams's deep interest in the village, and especially in the cause of education, had induced him, and with him his most accomplished and estimable wife, to consent to receive Miss Field as a lodger and boarder—the first thing of the kind which that couple had ever been persuaded to do."

"The very first time," repeated Mr. Williams, with great precision and emphasis, "that we have been prevailed upon to receive a boarder."

Colonel Tomlinson, with deliberation and unction, proceeded to state that he had not had the resolution to apply heretofore, even in behalf of close personal friends, for such a favor; but that the present crisis in the educational affairs of the town and of the surrounding country had become

so grave as to impel him to entreat William Williams, Esq., to assist the school authorities as no one else could. He went on to say that Mr. Williams did not encourage him, and that at one time he had about abandoned all hope, when Mrs. Williams's woman's heart became touched, and she protested that they ought to yield. A most tender-hearted and zealously public-minded lady Mrs. Williams had always been.

"And self-sacrificing," supplemented William Williams.

"Yes, indeed," said the Colonel. "The self-sacrifices of that accomplished lady are part of the history of our community. Though I must say, that when she insisted on foregoing the pleasures of having her husband on the bench I could not at all agree with her."

"My health, you know, Colonel," suggested Mr. Williams, sadly.

"I know; but what other woman in the world, with Mrs. Williams's proud and confident expectations, would have stopped to think of dyspepsia in connection with an office which would have crowned a life of great distinction and usefulness, and enabled her husband to transmit to posterity the most vital principles of—er—er—jurisprudence."

There was a long pause, which Mr. Williams spent in apparently melancholy reverie, and the Colonel in stern protest. Then the latter spoke:

"Mr Williams is dyspeptic; Mrs. Williams is dyspeptic; they have no child or other person in the house. The cooking is done by an aged woman, who formerly belonged to Mr. Williams,

and is thoroughly versed in—er—dyspeptic diet. Well-cooked bread,—often stale,—tea, milk, eggs, oat-meal, poultry, an occasional bit of mutton, fresh air, pure water, quiet—these are the features of the household and of the housekeeping. The very ideal of a—er—er—dyspeptic life.”

The Colonel, who had never experienced five minutes of indigestion since he was born, imagined that dyspepsia was a peculiar state of mind as well as of body, and that it had to be treated very much as religious sentiment, fondness for poetry and meditation, or many other frames of mind or peculiarities of sentiment. But his account served to put Eleanor into possession of some items which were most pleasing to her. Here were two well-bred old people, evidently poor, yet regardful of their dignity, who consented to take her to their quiet home and who could be expected to give her no fried bacon, or raw bread, and she was rather moved as she looked on the old, withered face of the broken-down lawyer, and the emaciated figure clothed in rusty black. She could imagine a faded wife at home, bearing with gentleness all the nervous uneasiness of her husband and all her own poverty and disappointment, and ready now to avail herself of the small assistance to be derived from a stranger's payment for board. But she saw that there was no lack of pride in this unsuccessful man. She therefore expressed herself much pleased that Mr. and Mrs. Williams had consented to receive her, and also said that she hoped she would give them no cause to regret their

kindness. These things were spoken so feelingly by her, that the old lawyer went to her and took her hand—very gallantly and respectfully he did it, too—and declared that he knew that they three would dwell most—er—ah—amicably and contentedly together.

It was soon arranged that she should pay the same rate as at Mrs. Haxwell's; and as this was within two or three days of the end of the month and the last day of the week, it was also agreed that she should move this afternoon. While the Colonel retired, following Mr. Williams out of the room, he whispered to Eleanor, "Give me five dollars to give Mr. Williams, if you have it, to purchase some supplies. If you have not the money, I will advance it to him. He is very poor." Eleanor smuggled a note into the chairman's hand, and went to pack her luggage for removal.

Mrs. Haxwell soon entered Eleanor's room.

"'Pears like you was fixin' to go somewheres," cried she, standing in the door with her hands on her hips. Mrs. Haxwell was never handsome; now she was positively ugly.

"I am," returned Eleanor. "Will you take a seat and hear me for a minute or two?"

"I reckon I kin hear 'bout as well whar I am."

"Very well," said Eleanor, quietly. "I found my health failing fast. I was satisfied that I could not work unless I had some change. I therefore tendered my resignation to the trustees, expecting to go home. The trustees refused to accept my resignation, and requested me to make another effort. They proposed to secure me lodgings where they thought my health would be bet-

ter than it has been. You have been kind to me, and I thank you for it. I have made no complaint of you; and I make none now. If my resignation had been accepted, as I hoped it would be, and as I wish it had been, I should have quitted this town on Monday. The trustees think I ought to remain. I consent to do so, for a little while at least. I sought you as soon as I came from the meeting; but you were not at home, and I instructed Polly to ask you to come here as soon as you returned. I propose to pay you a full month's board, though several days are yet lacking. Mrs. Haxwell, it was a fearful strait in which I found myself. You surely will not think hard of me."

"But you never give me no notice," protested the woman angrily.

"What notice did law or courtesy require me to give?" inquired Eleanor, good-naturedly. "But do not let that annoy you. If you think that I ought to have given you a month's notice, I will cheerfully pay you for another month's board, and at the same time let you rent this room or take any lodger you desire."

"I ain't a-talkin' 'bout no money," retorted Mrs. Haxwell. "You don't hurt my pocket by goin' away, but you hurt my feelin's."

"I am truly sorry, Mrs. Haxwell," said Eleanor. "But I have tried to show you how it all happened, and I think I have shown you how ready I am to make any reparation in my power."

"The long and short of it all is that my board and lodgin's don't suit you," said the landlady. Eleanor remained silent, though she packed with increased energy.

"An' you've got tired of the only place whar you was made welcome, an' you're a-goin' to live among the lawyer fam'lies."

Still Eleanor made no answer.

"An' it's a mighty fine time you'll have with Squire Williams an' his old wife. 'Spepsy is one thing, and starvin' is another. Them what loves to starve, let 'em starve. Starvin's mighty rustic I s'pose," and she tossed her head and made hideous faces.

Eleanor said nothing.

"An' it's good s'ciety you're after too, I s'pose. Old Widder Hax'll ain't choice enough for the likes of you—bein' as how you come from the Nawth. Oh yes! Oh my! Good s'ciety is what Yankees has to have."

Eleanor now went to the woman and said: "Mrs. Haxwell, I have borne just as much of your reproach as I think it my duty to bear. If you have nothing better to say, I must close the door upon you!" and she fixed upon the angry woman a look of such rebuke and decision that the latter shrank back into the hall. This was not the end of the tirade, however, for Mrs. Haxwell could be heard, for minutes, berating "Yankee women," "Yankee airs," and the "Yankees what was doin' well to go to starvation houses," and the like, which ultimately culminated in her screaming out that Polly was "nothin' but a good-fer-nothin' Yankee nigger!" The clamor ceased after a time, and Eleanor experienced much relief, for, truth to say, she had been positively alarmed by the frantic voice and gesticulation of the woman. She reckoned without her host—or hostess—however,

when she fancied that the war was over. It only needed a small provocation to be renewed with full vigor. This little Minnie furnished when she came and tapped at Eleanor's door.

"You git away from that door, Minnie Haxwell!" shrieked the mother. "Is you a born fool? Don't you know you ain't good enough to 'sociate with Yankee quality?"

"Mr. Williams told me to tell Miss Eleanor that he would come here directly with a dray, for her and her things," returned Minnie in a trembling voice.

"He oughter fetch two waggins for her things and 'bout three carriages fer herself," mockingly cried the mother. "But my child ain't fitten to go anigh sich quality. So you come here to your old mother. He, he, he!" The landlady was hysterical now; but not more so than Eleanor, whose nervous system was quite unequal to such a contest. Therefore she hailed the intelligence which promised deliverance from the siege, her escape having become somewhat problematical of late. Just and kind-hearted as she was, she suffered more and more as the matter proceeded, for she gradually grew to fear that she had given substantial cause for the woman's resentment. The woman was stupid and rude; but she had been as courteous to her lodger as she was capable of being, and Eleanor reflected, that the sensitiveness of people is usually in inverse ratio to their attainments and social standing, and therefore that it is more unkind to affront a humble person than a great one. She owed Mrs. Haxwell nothing. She had paid for a good deal

more than she had received, and she was ready to pay, as she had said, for what she would certainly never receive; but she had to admit that her leave-taking was very sudden, and that it implied no great consideration for Mrs. Haxwell's arrangements or for her feelings. She could hardly have done otherwise, unhappy, friendless stranger that she was, with a body racked with pain and a heart worn down with misery.

The situation was relieved of much of its embarrassment by the coming of Mr. Williams. She heard his shrill voice in the hall just as she finished packing, and began to brace herself for the final interview with her landlady; and she went at once to meet him. He informed her that a cart was at the door. Then he called the two men in charge of the conveyance, and bade them bring out Miss Field's luggage. Mrs. Haxwell stood by, her face scornful, her hands grasping her hips, her whole figure rigidly warlike. Mr. Williams paid no heed to her until Eleanor's effects had been put into the cart.

"Have you settled with Mrs. Haxwell?" he then inquired of Eleanor.

Eleanor advanced to her hostess, saying, as she opened her *porte-monnaie*:

"How much is the bill, Mrs. Haxwell?"

"Oh, just as you please," answered the dame with a sarcastic smirk.

"It is just as *you* please," said Eleanor quietly. "My month is not quite out; but I ought not to pay you for less, and will not. If you think you ought to have had notice, I desire to pay you for the additional time to cover the period for which

notice should have been given—a fortnight or a month.”

“It ain’t my practice to charge people for what they don’t git,” responded Mrs. Haxwell—“whatever folks in other parts does.”

Mr. Williams now put in his oar. “Mrs. Haxwell,” said he, “I understand that your rate has been fifteen dollars per month. The law of this State requires no special notice of quitting on the part of a lodger from month to month, unless there be a previous contract to such effect, or unless arrangements between the parties imply or necessarily involve a mutual compact embracing notice or a responsibility for loss that may be occasioned by a sudden termination of the relations of landlord and tenant, or landlord and guest, as the case may be.” Mr. Williams was on his own ground now, and spoke with confidence and unction.

“You know the law, Squire,” returned Mrs. Haxwell, somewhat meekly.

“I should think I did know it,” returned Mr. Williams, loftily, “after forty years’ study and practice. Mrs. Haxwell—permit me, Miss Field,” taking Eleanor’s roll of money—“I hereby tender you fifteen dollars, in full payment for Miss Field’s board and lodging for the current month which will terminate in a few days. I understand that you demand no more.”

“I ain’t demanded nothin’,” returned Mrs. Haxwell, sullenly.

“Very well then,” pursued the Squire, fixing the landlady with the long index finger of his right hand. “Gentlemen—I beg pardon—ladies

—forensic habit—hard to get out of those things. We now see that Mrs. Haxwell demands no more. The witness—there's that old habit again!—Mrs. Haxwell does not profess to require anything additional."

"I ain't a-goin' to tech none o' that money," said Mrs. Haxwell.

"Then," said the Squire, "we lay it on the table before her. Now, Miss Field, we are free to go," and then he placed the money on the table. Eleanor advanced to the woman, but was shown her back.

"I am sorry to offend you," said she gently. "Let us part friends." But no response came from the reversed figure.

"Good-by, Minnie," said the teacher, moving toward the child, who stood at her mother's side. She would have kissed the little one; and Minnie gazed at her tearfully and affectionately. But the moment the teacher touched the child's shoulder the mother snatched her away, screaming out:

"Come away, you Minnie! That Yankee is too good fer the likes of me and you!"

So Eleanor walked out with the lawyer, leaving the angry woman, her child and the money in the hall. The lawyer stepped along briskly and spoke cheerfully. He had, as he thought, just defended a client from ill treatment, and vindicated the wisdom and justice of the law. He made such feeling manifest by declaring, five minutes after they left the door, that he would greatly like "to get just one lick at that woman and her absurd pretensions in a court of justice."

At the lawyer's house they found his faded wife, who made Eleanor as welcome as an absolutely colorless person could well do. The old lady showed her to an upper room, very large, with four great windows, furnished with a very faded and much-patched carpet, faded furniture, faded curtains, faded bed-quilts—everything old, and faded, and melancholy. But there was quiet there. No children clamored, no animal raised a voice, the very evening breeze seemed to steal by on tip-toe. The place was very tidy; the fare was delicate and negative—toast, weak tea, milk, cold bread and butter; the service was noiselessly performed by a withered brown woman; the conversation of the old couple was dull; but everything wore the air of retirement from activity and from conflict except with slow and steady age and poverty, and therefore spoke of rest and quiet thought. And when the sorely tried stranger went to sleep that night she felt herself glide into a dreamland of repose such as she had not known since leaving her New England home.

CHAPTER IX

Eleanor Field's life in the "dyspeptic household," as Colonel Tomlinson termed it, was not one of absolutely unalloyed pleasure, but it was a great improvement on that she had led at Mrs. Haxwell's. The Williamses were fairly educated, and they were refined. The Squire was nervous, conceited, somewhat eccentric, and excessively vain, but he was most deferential to Eleanor at all times. When she or his wife entered a room he invariably rose and remained standing till the newcomer was seated; he never permitted either one of them to move a chair without his assistance, and he always attempted to take the wood out of their hands when they sought to replenish the open fire. Eleanor found a fire in her room every evening, which, she ascertained later, was usually built, or at least lighted, by the old lawyer himself. So when he ranted against the Federal Government, snarled over the war, or paraded the Southern aristocracy, she was quite ready to endure, especially after hearing from Colonel Tomlinson that he had, in consequence of the war, lost a valuable slave property and become impoverished by debt.

Mrs. Williams was not communicative for some time, and she carried in her face a sort of reproach of all persons in any wise contributing, directly or through others, to her ill fortune; and it was plain that she regarded the people of the North a unit in all such things. But she was al-

ways dignified, always courteous to Eleanor, and solicitous of her comfort. She had none of the Squire's vivacity either of thought or of manner, being calm, quiet, sad, thoughtful and self-restrained. Mind, and heart, and life seemed to have faded as much as her pale complexion and her withered hands—small, shapely hands, by the way, with tapering fingers, smooth skin, and polished, pink nails, which when folded on her lap seemed to make mute appeal to every beholder against the hard fortune of the times.

Her hands, especially her nails, reminded Eleanor so forcibly of the hands and nails of Margaret Mason as they had appeared by the lamp-light on the night Margaret spent with her, that, a few days after she went there to live, she mentioned it. Mrs. Williams smiled, and answered that it was not strange that there should be a resemblance between them, inasmuch as Margaret Mason's father was her first cousin.

"I am so glad to hear it!" exclaimed Eleanor. "I can now have some one to listen while I speak praises of her beauty and intelligence, her refinement and goodness."

"You could scarcely find any one more ready to hear Margaret praised than I am," returned the old lady earnestly. "I have loved her as I would have loved my own daughter; and to me she is the very dearest woman in the world."

"I wish I had some way to let her know fully how grateful I am for her kindness," cried Eleanor.

"You do not need to tell her more," returned Mrs. Williams. "She has said enough to me to

show that she only fears you overestimate her attention to you."

"I cannot well do that," said Eleanor. "Although perhaps, while sleeping, I did so; for in my dreams that night and the next there appeared to me several times an angel of beauty and sympathy, and that angel always had the face of Margaret Mason"—and Eleanor shed tears of grateful emotion as she recalled those lovely visions.

"God bless you and her!" replied the old lady as she wiped her eyes and walked away.

The school went on pretty much as before Eleanor's illness. Minnie Haxwell quit coming, but Jake came, looking somewhat confused, and, for him, wonderfully thoughtful. He did not engage in a single fight for eight or ten days, and when he did the other boy was the aggressor. He began to recite pretty well—for Jake. Now he scarcely ever missed more than two or three words in his "spelling," he could answer most of the questions in geography, and there were seldom more than one or two mistakes in his "sums." Grammar remained a profound mystery to him, of course, for people require to be partly civilized in order to have a conception of that arbitrary science, and the difficulties in his way may be readily imagined from his saying, as he did to his teacher when reproved for appropriating a slate pencil which was the subject of controversy between another boy and a girl, "'Tain't his'n nor her'n nuther, but they is jis' a-squawlin' to have they fun." However, he was on the mend, and his deportment improved decidedly. The other pupils made progress as rapidly as Eleanor had expected,

indeed more so, after a few weeks spent in unteaching erroneous notions they had imbibed, and in starting them under a new system. It was not easy work for her, and she seldom came from the academy without a feeling of exhaustion. Still, that exhaustion was rather of an intellectual character than of a nervous one, and left her sooner, and was less distressing while it lasted, than was the weariness and worry of spirit which followed the bad behavior and inattention of children.

A goodly proportion of the scholars gradually but steadily came under her influence—the boys sooner than the girls, for the proud, self-sufficient little fellows had a vein of chivalry which forbade them to do unmanly things; but a few of each sex remained obdurate for several weeks. At last one of them, a girl of thirteen years and daughter of a prominent merchant in the village, remained on the play-ground after recess and after being called to, and then sauntered leisurely to the class bench in the midst of the recitation. Eleanor inquired what had prevented her from coming sooner. She replied, “Oh, nothing,” with a toss of her head.

“Then,” said Eleanor, “you had best continue your holiday, and go home.”

The girl stared at her.

“I tell you to take your books and go home,” said Eleanor, sternly. The girl stood a moment as if to study the resolute brown eye that confronted her, and then went. Jake forgot all discipline, and expressed his pleasure at being rid of “that stuck-up varmint, Sally Mufkins”—and had to be silenced, and kept in after school for his

misbehavior. Sally never returned, and the school was perceptibly benefited by her absence.

The following day Eleanor received through the post a note, in execrable English, from Sally's mother, which asserted that "forriners" could not "apreciate" the feelings of young Southern ladies, and promised that "people" would not endure such "tirrany" much longer from "them as lives on the people's bread"; but she put the note into the fire and said nothing. No one mentioned the matter to her again.

It was now the month of April. Whatever the springtime may be to persons in ordinary circumstances, it is often the saddest season of the year to one suffering under mental afflictions. So it was with Eleanor Field, and she was unable to account fully for her state of feeling. She was now comfortably located. The house was pleasant, the household agreeable, her material comforts were as well supplied as she could demand. She had lighter work as the work progressed, her health was decidedly improved. There were the means of healthful and agreeable exercise around her in the lanes and shady forests. She was a little less lonely than formerly, for she had received at least the consideration of an intelligent and refined family. Yet there was the depression, which seemed to increase daily. The octopus of ostracism was daily grasping her with a fresh tentacle, and reason was worth little in contending against it. All of us who have been boys or girls—and most of us have, in spite of the tendency of these times to produce full-grown men and women—have experienced the misery

which comes from confinement. Eleanor Field ought to have understood that this opposition to restraint or constraint is a natural human trait and, understanding it, ought to have made a philosophic allowance for its blind and irrational operation on her mind. But she had been reared to such freedom of action and such welcome among the people about her that she could not recognize in her restiveness over her separation from those now about her a natural, but foolish, desire for a thing simply because it was out of reach.

She would not have enjoyed the society of twenty people in the village, perhaps, and, as she saw them, she herself thought that she would not have cared a great deal to be with all of that twenty. With the majority of the giggling girls and awkward young men of the place she could never have had any sympathy, to say nothing of pleasure. And certainly most of them appeared never to see her, and those who did see her looked at her without any sign of feeling. But what was the trouble. She knew that they ought to be nothing more to her than she was to them, and her sense of superior intelligence and superior education to at least the majority of them sometimes suggested to her that she was well clear of them. But even these remonstrances and arguments availed nothing against what she knew to be a mere sentiment.

The philosopher who knows all about the human constitution will readily dispose of the matter by saying that man is a gregarious animal, and therefore he must suffer from deprivation of the society of his fellows. But such a philosopher

ought to remember that any decent man or woman is very happy to be rid of the society of inferior persons, and that the majority of philosophers rarely care for association with any but a very small number of their brethren. Indeed, not only philosophers, but most of the ignorant snobs who have riches or titles that they do not deserve, take a good deal of trouble to keep out of the way of humanity at large.

The philosopher's solution of the question, though partly correct, is not sufficient; the principal cause of the distress in such cases is that what we have or can easily obtain is of no great moment to us, but all that seems to be beyond our reach—and all the more for being just beyond it—seems to us a prize of inestimable importance. And those who are free from such influence are either very much above or very much below the rest of their kind.

Eleanor received letters frequently from her family—on an average one a week from her mother, one every ten or twelve days from Julia, and one every three or four weeks from Tom. All of these were more or less efforts to make her cheerful in her new occupation and location, for even Julia concealed from her all troubles at home and all apprehensions for her safety or welfare. The misfortune was that they were too careful and guarded. There was evidently an understanding among the home people, if not a positive arrangement, to write everything pleasant and exclude everything disagreeable. Still, after making large allowances, as Eleanor soon learned to do, she was much comforted and somewhat

strengthened by the correspondence. The mother broke down once—on the receipt of Margaret Mason's letter describing the teacher's illness—and clamored for her daughter's return. But on the daughter's recovery she not only was as well satisfied as before the sickness, but allowed herself to believe, and to write, that a brighter prospect than ever was opened by Eleanor's acquisition of the amiable and accomplished friend her sickness appeared to have brought her. Eleanor never informed her that her recovery lost her the friend sickness had gained her.

Margaret Mason was the one person whose actions confused Eleanor. All the others about her were entirely consistent in their course of action; the people at the hotel showed her such attentions as their duty to a respectable female guest seemed to demand; Mrs. Haxwell was considerate so far and so long as her pecuniary interests suggested; the Williamses received her in order to supplement their small means with the money derived from her board, and could scarcely be said to have exceeded the demands of ordinary hospitality to the stranger within their gates; the school trustees had given her the support which the proper discipline and management of the school required, and in their bearing toward her had conducted themselves only as their sense of their own dignity dictated; her pupils obeyed her and treated her with respect. But all of these had extended to her only official or business courtesies, and had never given her any social or

personal recognition whatever. Margaret Mason, on the contrary, had had no business connection with her, and had met her only by her own seeking; and, coming to her voluntarily, had nursed her tenderly and supplied her needs bountifully. Yet she had gone away suddenly, and had never since come to her or communicated with her. Perhaps her kindness had been prompted by mere humanity; perhaps she had been actuated by the sense of duty which leads a surgeon to render assistance to a beggar who has been run over by a railway car, or by the small, cold charity which throws a bone to a starving dog. But Eleanor Field recalled her thoughtfulness and gentleness, as different from the manner of the professional alms-giver as it was from that of the professional nurse. And she particularly recalled—and always with tears—how the stately Southerner had called her “dear,” and how she had kissed her aching forehead. Such actions on the part of an intelligent, accomplished and self-possessed woman indicated a personal interest widely separated from even the most earnest humanity, and still more distinct from what is generally termed charity. Eleanor had learned to love this beautiful and pure Southern girl, and to feel that with her for her friend and associate she would be supremely indifferent to the coldness, or even the active hostility, of all others. Her heart refused to entertain for a moment a suggestion of that woman’s selfishness, or fickleness, or undue pride; but her mind was sorely exercised to determine how or why she had lost the one being who had been close to her in this strange land, the one being

who had engaged her affections. She argued with herself, she tried all sorts of conjectures and hypotheses, she strove to teach herself indifference, she labored to banish all thought of the matter; but the matter remained fixed in her mind, and every day, and many times in the same day, beset and harassed her cruelly. And the most reasonable answer, indeed the only one quite intelligible, which her mind gave was the one horrible word "ostracism." The word was always in her thought; the thing seemed to be always in the very atmosphere, until it became to her a living existence, a sort of demon spirit pursuing her even in her solitude and driving all of her race to hate and avoid her.

CHAPTER X

One afternoon in April, after a long solitary walk in the forest, Eleanor returned to Mr. Williams's, just as the sun went down, pondering as usual her melancholy situation. Walking with her eyes cast on the ground, she failed to discover an equipage at the gate until she reached for the long, heavy latch. She recognized the vehicle as that of Margaret Mason, and would have turned away, for fear of appearing to thrust herself upon its mistress; but she instantly became aware that several persons on the veranda of the house observed her, and at once decided that to return to the street or to walk around the house would indicate a refusal to meet the persons before her or a dread of encountering them. She therefore went forward and ascended the long flight of steps.

As she neared the top of the steps Margaret came forward; and as she reached the floor that lady extended her hand, saying, "I am glad to see you looking so well," and then shook hands with her cordially, and led her to a chair next to that where she had been sitting. The others of the group were Squire and Mrs. Williams and a large dull-looking countryman shabbily dressed. These three rose as Eleanor and Margaret Mason approached them, the lawyer and his wife bowing to her and bidding her be seated, while the countryman shuffled his broad-brimmed wool hat in his hands and stared at her. Miss Mason introduced

him as Mr. Jernigan. Mr. Jernigan bent his body in what he meant for a bow, and continued to stare without moving his lips. Indeed, he was so absorbed in the contemplation of Eleanor's person as to forget to resume his seat until both the Squire and his wife reminded him by two several invitations to do so. Even then the stare was kept up, with very few and brief intermissions, until he took his leave, some fifteen or twenty minutes later. The stare was not rude; it was simply one of blank wonder, such as a child would indulge in on its first sight of an elephant or a giraffe.

"Margaret was wondering, just before you came," said Mrs. Williams to Eleanor, "if she would have to go away without seeing you."

"It was getting rather late for me to be in the open air," said Margaret; "and I had already waited about an hour for you. Dr. Thompson is very strict with me since my last sickness. For two weeks I was kept in doors, and afterward was allowed only a few minutes walk daily, and that at noon, and in the sun, and on the dry, graveled walks of the flower-garden. To-day I came to the village for the first time in four weeks.

Eleanor experienced a pang of positive remorse when she heard this delicate accounting for not visiting her; and as she heard the sweet, clear voice and saw the play of expressions of the refined face she wondered how she could have had a thought unfavorable to the lovely woman before her. But she made brave amends by accepting cordially the attention shown.

"I am very glad to see you again," said she,

"and I am very sorry to hear of your illness. I trust you are quite recovered."

"I think I am," returned Miss Mason. "I shall, however, require some days of exercise and sunshine to restore my activity and strength."

"It is strange that I heard nothing of this," cried Eleanor. "Did you know, Mrs. Williams, that Miss Mason was ill?"

"No," replied the other. "I heard nothing of it till an hour ago. She and her mother live two miles out of town. No one has been there from here, nor has any one come here from their home. People who knew of it probably omitted to tell me, because they thought I was sure to know."

"I was not very ill," observed Miss Mason. "I had nothing more than a cold, with a slight cough; but the physician, knowing that I have weak lungs, thought it necessary to guard against a serious attack by keeping me closely housed."

Eleanor now observed the peculiar transparency of Margaret's complexion, the remarkable light in her eyes, and the delicacy of her frame, and her recollection of consumption in her own land caused her at once to wonder if this bright intellect, this resolute will, and this fascinating beauty were not maintained at the expense of vital energies. The thought caused her such a shock that, before she was conscious of her action, she laid her hand on Margaret's, and said:

"I am so grieved that I did not know of your illness. I should have gone to you at once, in the hope to return in some measure the great assistance you gave me."

"You would have been most welcome," returned

Margaret, placing her other hand on the teacher's. "But it was well that you did not know. You would have been overworked in nursing me and attending to the duties of your school at the same time. And it would have been exceedingly tiresome for you to sit with one who was forbidden to talk much. But I am permitted to talk now; and if you think you could endure the solitariness of the country for a day or two, I will come or send for you on Friday afternoon, expecting you to remain with me till Sunday afternoon or Monday morning, as may suit your convenience."

Eleanor was dumfounded. Had the millennium arrived? Had the gates of Paradise been flung open to all mankind in an instant? For a moment she stared almost as stupidly as farmer Jernigan.

Miss Mason saw her embarrassment, and at once relieved her by continuing:

"You dismiss your school at two o'clock, I believe. Then you have to come home and have your dinner. That will occupy you until three o'clock. After that you will have to pack a little bag or bundle of some sort, and then you may have to straighten yourself a little. Mr. Jernigan, all the ladies have to primp somewhat when they go out, don't they?"

Mr. Jernigan was thoroughly startled by being so suddenly made a party to the proceeding, and crossed and uncrossed his long legs two or three times, and twisted his great soft hat into all sorts of shapes, before he could find words to answer.

"Oh, you must answer my question," resumed Miss Mason, laughing. "Don't they, now?"

"Well," drawled the farmer, "I reckon they do.

My pa says as how sister Sar'h Ann would have to primp if she was goin' out fer to set a hen!"

"I had no idea that Sarah Ann was so particular as that," said Margaret. "But when a young lady is as pretty as she is she does well to make sure of always looking nice. So, Miss Field, you will probably be ready by five o'clock; and if you say so, the carriage will be here at that hour."

"It will afford me much pleasure," returned Eleanor. "I shall be ready at that time."

"I shall come for you unless I am prevented by something I cannot now foresee. But you are to come, whether I come for you or not. The horses are perfectly safe. That young one I told you about is stamping impatiently yonder at the gate; but he has been right well broken since I saw you. But if you prefer, I will drive a more steady one in his place."

"I am not afraid of horses," answered Eleanor. "I was reared on a farm, and have ridden and driven spirited horses repeatedly."

"Now," cried Margaret, brightly, "I am delighted to hear that. I am anxious to take some long brisk horseback rides. With that horse and one not yet broken to harness we can have gallops over the country that will be good for both of us."

While she was speaking a man on horseback cantered up the street, dismounted at the gate, and after throwing the reins over a post, entered the yard. Mrs. Williams remarked that it was William Huntley, and suggested that the presence of the Mason carriage must have brought him in, as he had "loped" past the house a dozen times in the last month or so without once drawing rein.

Huntley walked rapidly up the path and mounted the steps. He politely returned the greetings with which he was saluted, but shook hands with no one, and took a chair at a short distance from the others. His first words after bidding all of them good day were addressed to his cousin.

"I hope you have experienced no unpleasant effect from your coming out, Margaret," said he, eyeing her seriously.

"There it is!" exclaimed Mrs. Williams. "I thought you did not come to see the rest of us."

"Well, Aunt Williams," returned he, "there was no need to look after any of the rest of you. But Margaret was supposed by her physician to run some risk in driving in an open carriage even in this mild weather."

"I feel improved already," responded Margaret, "and I am resolved not to be suffocated by the close air of houses. When Miss Field and I get on horseback—as we shall on Friday or Saturday—I shall regain all I have lost."

Huntley looked quickly at the teacher, but said nothing.

"But," said Margaret, "you did not stop here, William, merely to inquire about my health."

"N—no," returned he, with a slight smile. "To be frank, I observed that young horse in your carriage as you drove past the hotel, and thought I would drive him if you have no objection."

"What?" cried Mrs. Williams, nervously. "Do you think him unsafe in John's hands?"

"No, John drives quite as well as I do, but I want to try his pace in harness."

"That means a break-neck speed from here

home, and perhaps a runaway," suggested Mrs. Williams.

"No one will think us part of a funeral procession," replied Huntley, dryly; "but I expect to land Margaret safe at her mother's gate."

"I would not let him drive, Margaret. He is not used to the horse, nor the horse to him; and you know how he tries a horse's pace!"

"Do not be alarmed, Aunt," said Margaret, placidly. "I shall be quite safe. I think both those horses can make pretty fast time; and William will find out if they can. Mamma has given John such positive orders that he refuses to put them to anything like their speed."

"Well, well," sighed Mrs. Williams, "I don't know which of you is the more reckless with horses."

"Suppose you take a turn with us," suggested Huntley, jocularly. "It will stir you up as you have not been stirred for many a day."

"I have no doubt of that," answered that old lady; "but I have no inclination to be 'stirred up,' as you call it."

"Then we'll go; eh, Margaret?" Said Huntley, "John can ride my horse as far as your gate."

Then the two cousins bade the others adieu, and started, Margaret turning at the foot of the steps to repeat to Eleanor that she would come or send for her on Friday afternoon, and then following Huntley, who had not waited for her. Again she turned when half-way to the street, and called to farmer Jernigan.

"Oh, Mr. Jernigan!"

"Yes'm," responded that gentleman briskly.

"Tell Sarah Ann to come over as soon as she can find time. I think that lavender dress of hers lacks but a little change of trimming to make it very handsome. Some of the trimming is of the wrong shade of purple, and I want to fix it for her. Tell her I have some braid that is the very thing."

"I'll tell her," bawled Jernigan. "I know what you says'll be gospel to Sary Ann," and then he laughed at the top of his voice.

At the gate Huntley mounted the box of the open landau, John the coachman descended, and Margaret took her seat beside her cousin. John experienced some difficulty in getting astride of Huntley's Delta, who reared and plunged furiously.

"Now, John," Eleanor heard Huntley say, not loudly but in very clear tones, "keep in rear of us; for if you try to pass us, this young horse will try to run, and I shall not be able to get any sort of trotting out of him. Can you hold the mare with that snaffle bit?"

"I reckon I kin, sir," answered John.

"I don't want any 'reckoning' about it. I want you to be sure of it."

"Lord, Mars William!" exclaimed John, "don't you know I gwine to hole on to dis horse long as any bref in my body? I ain't gwine to let her make no 'sturbance to make dat colt run. I ain't gwine to let young Miss get hurt."

"Very well," cried Huntley. "Here goes!" With that he spoke to his horses and started them slowly. Gradually and constantly the pace was increased as the carriage moved along the broad street, till at the distance of two hundred yards

the hard clay rang with the incessant rattle of horses' hoofs, and the carriage seemed to sail like some huge, dark bird skimming the earth in fastest flight. Soon the equipage rushed into the gloom of the great oaks that bordered and overhung the way, and was lost to sight; but for some minutes the rapid clatter of hoofs was heard.

"Confound that wild Jehu!" exclaimed the Squire. "He'd drive the chariot of the sun!"

"By George!" cried Jernigan, excitedly, "Bill Huntley'll be able to tell adjactly how fur them horses can trot in a minute—ef he don't tell how fur they can run when they run away!"

"Good gracious!" moaned Mrs. Williams. "Margaret's father was killed by a horse; and I have long had a dread that she would go the same way."

"Don't worry, Miss Williams," protested Jernigan. "Bill Huntley is as fine a man with a horse as ever held lines or sot in a saddle. He ain't goin' to let nothin' happen."

On Eleanor's inquiry of the particulars of the death of Margaret's father, Mrs. Williams said that he was riding a young and very wild horse in a fox-chase, and on account of having two or three young hounds in the cry in whose performance he was interested he persisted in following close upon the dogs through a very hilly and heavily timbered country; that his horse finally bolted while descending a steep hill in the midst of a thick growth of trees, and, in spite of the rider's efforts to guide him, ran at full speed against the roots of an immense upturned tree, which he cleared by a remarkable leap, but on the other side of which

was a deep wide hole left by roots at the foot of the tree when it was blown down; that the horse landed in this hole, breaking his own neck against the farther edge of it, and throwing the rider against one side of the bank in such a way as to break his spine. Mr. Mason lived to be carried home and treated by such medical skill as could be summoned in the course of a few hours, but died in twelve hours after the accident. Mrs. Williams added that he was just thirty years of age, and that Margaret, his only living child, was but four years of age at the time. Mr. Mason was Mrs. Williams's cousin german, and the narration cost her no little pain, though the unfortunate occurrence took place nearly eighteen years before the time of her describing it.

Eleanor reproached herself for having caused the gentle lady distress, and hastened to express her regret, earnestly and tearfully, going as she did so to Mrs. Williams, and taking her withered hand in her own.

"Do not be annoyed," returned that lady, gently stroking Eleanor's hand. "You ought to know that sad history, as Margaret's friend. I would have told you at some time—perhaps this evening."

Mr. Jernigan, though perfectly familiar with the facts narrated, was no little moved, and he soon took leave of them, speaking his farewell in a subdued tone, and walking lightly and slowly away.

The conversation continued to be about Margaret Mason, for Mrs. Williams was devoted to her, and had more or less to say concerning her

every day of her life, and the Squire was as proud of her as if she had been his own daughter. "You see," said he, every now and then when her merits had been mentioned by himself or another, "that young woman has supplied the place of children to Mrs. Williams and myself, and we have taught her and looked after her just as if she were our own. You have no idea how I used to drill her in Latin and mathematics, and how I exercised her in English classics. She was so bright and ready to learn that she positively absorbed knowledge."

Eleanor had often heard him dilate on Margaret's charms of person, mind and character, but she had never heard him refer to Huntley, as she was curious to hear him do, on account of the general belief (in which Mrs. Williams shared) that he would before long marry his cousin Margaret. So when Mrs. Williams touched on the matter, as she did in this conversation, Eleanor listened for the Squire's judgment. He did not keep her long in waiting or in doubt.

"Mrs. Williams," said he, with much precision, "you know my opinion of that young man. I bear him no ill will. On the contrary, I wish him well. But he is a hard-headed, proud, imperious person, who probably neither fears God nor regards man. At all events, he has no sort of reverence for anything human, and never has had. He was only sixteen years old when his father died. I read the will to him—which *I* had drawn, mind you—a few days after the death. The bulk of the property was left to William's mother for life, with remainder to William at her death—a very wise

arrangement, for the estate was sufficient to support both of them handsomely, and Mrs. Huntley was a most intelligent and excellent woman, and dead sure never to marry again. Well, the provision as to the remainder in one of the plantations was different from that of the rest of the estate, it being the purpose of General Huntley to keep that plantation entailed in the family. So William asked if he would be absolute owner of that plantation at his mother's death. I started to show him he would not, by first giving him some idea of estates tail and those on condition, when out he bawls, 'Entails and conditions be damned! I want to know the effect of these long winded limitations!' Now what do you think of that?"

"It was dreadful!" responded Eleanor, in as steady a voice as she could command, for she had more than once been the victim of the Squire's harangues on the limitations of real estate.

"But, Mr. Williams," cried his wife, "you must not omit to mention that William endeavored to make amends."

"That is so," said the Squire. "He came to me the next day, and made a fine, manly apology. He had had no opportunity at the time of his rude speech for I had berated him, and he had walked off. With his apology he brought and presented to me a very handsome copy of Shakespeare, in six volumes, which had belonged to his father. And, by the way, he wrote on the fly leaf of each volume the much quoted passage, 'The quality of mercy is not strained, etc.' And, by Jupiter, I don't know to this day whether the rascal meant it for an appeal to my generosity or as a joke. Ha, ha, ha! A precious youngster that was!"

CHAPTER XI

At four o'clock Friday afternoon Eleanor was informed by the serving woman that Miss Mason desired to speak with her at the gate. On her going out to her the latter informed her, after apologizing for putting her to the trouble of coming to her, that she had some shopping to do that would occupy an hour, and that she would then return for her. At five o'clock the carriage drew up before the gate, and after some five or ten minutes of leave-taking with Mrs. Williams, the Northern woman got into the carriage, to be driven to a Southern home.

The conversation between the two consisted principally of inquiries by the stranger and answers from her hostess. One of the first questions was as to the drive three days before, by William Huntley, Eleanor adding that she had felt somewhat apprehensive that the great speed so soon after starting would lead to a runaway.

"I have no doubt Aunt Ellen was quite alarmed," replied Margaret, laughing; "and knowing her dread of horses I insisted that William should drive slowly until we were out of sight; but he protested that we must not lose the benefit of the smooth stretch of road that begins just this side of that grove, so off we went, both of the horses responding to his encouragement, and poor John almost exhausted in holding back the mare he rode. We spent three and a half minutes, by my timing, on the first mile, for the colt broke several

times, and twice attempted to run; but the second mile, though not as good ground as the first, was made in a few seconds less than three minutes. I lost four or five seconds from a jolt which threw my watch into my lap. William was greatly pleased with the result, and predicts that he will drive the colt, in a light sulky, in less than two-forty, after a little practice. Our landau is too heavy a vehicle, of course, for fast trotting."

"Did John manage to keep in rear of you?" asked Eleanor, remembering Delta's frantic efforts to get away from him.

"He had a hard time. Once she carried him almost to the heads of our horses, and I thought we were in for a run. But William spoke to her and she turned her head toward him and moderated her speed."

"Did you tell your mother about the drive?"

"No; but when she saw William on the box, as she did, standing in the piazza, she knew quite as much as she cared to know—and perhaps a little more. He drove at a very moderate gait from the time we turned in sight of the house, but mamma was quite sure that the pace before that had been very different. You do not fear horses?"

"No—that is, none that I have yet encountered. I have not ridden or driven thoroughbreds; but I have ridden some pretty wild colts and run-aways."

"Well," continued Margaret, "you will ride this colt without difficulty—you see I am driving him again. When we ride I shall take a younger

one—his half-brother—who is rather a hard-headed youngster, but yields eventually to my persuasions of one kind and another.”

“I imagine,” said Eleanor, smiling, “that sometimes your persuasions are of a very positive character.”

“Well,” returned Margaret, “the young of all animals require some discipline. But let me show you how this colt moves. If you will stand and hold to the box-seat you can see the horses over it. John, put your horses into a more lively gait. I wish Miss Field to see what we are making of the colt.”

“Miss Margaret,” replied John, in some embarrassment, “yo’ ma tole me to be mighty partic’lar sence Mars William been drive dat colt so fast.”

“Very well, John,” said Margaret, good-naturedly, “we’ll do nothing violent. But we’ll show something of the pace we can make. Drive up before we lose this smooth quarter of a mile, if you think you know how to show off your horses.”

“Mind now,” protested John, “it’s you as gives de commandment. I ain’t ’sponsible. Git up, babies!” Then the pair forged forward in a trot that carried the vehicle humming along the firm, level roadbed. As the ladies stood together in the open landau, steadying themselves by holding the iron railing at the back of the driver’s seat, and looking over, they could see perfectly the movement of the horses. The older and heavier of the two animals responded to the order promptly and rushed forward with long strides, carrying almost the whole weight of the vehicle

without apparent effort, while the younger and lighter one, though moving less smoothly, stretched his long, lean limbs in a trot that threatened to take even his sturdy senior off his feet. John was an expert whip, and he held the pair throughout the quarter at the same fast trot, without a break.

Eleanor was much exhilarated by the rapid dash through the fresh, pure April air, and exclaimed gleefully, "This is the most delightful thing I have experienced since I left home." Margaret smiled. "I thought you would like it," said she—"that is, if you were really fond of horses."

"But you never mentioned the older horse—the near one," said Eleanor. "He moves beautifully."

"Yes, Old Trot is perhaps the fastest horse in the county for a mile or so. But Trot is at his best. He will never improve, as he is eight years old. Moreover, he is a plebeian, whose ancestry were all scrubs probably. But the colt is a thoroughbred, only three and a half years old, and therefore may have a wonderful development."

"Do you prefer thoroughbreds for driving?"

"No. That is, I do not want running stock. The race-horse blood is generally wild and intractable, and not seldom vicious in harness. Besides, they are not built for draft. But I think that after a family of horses have been driven for several generations, and have weight enough for draft, they become very fine trotters, generally, and are reasonably docile. William Huntley's mare comes of a strain on the dam's side that has never been fit for harness; but this colt's kindred, both

through his sire and his dam, have done well for three or four generations. His dam, now twelve years of age, who is usually driven with Trot, is one of the swiftest, steadiest, safest horses I know. Her dam, who died just after the war, was a capital draft horse—though requiring a steady hand for her driving. I do not recollect the sire or the dam of that mare, as both of them were sold out of the family when I was very young; but my mother tells me that both sire and dam were considered fine draft horses. The other colt we have is of a different strain, on his sire's side being a half-brother to William's mare. I doubt whether he will ever do much in harness. But I mean to try him before long."

"I believe you love horses even more than I do," said Eleanor.

"I am certainly very fond of them, as might be expected from my rearing. I cannot remember when I did not ride horseback; and I distinctly recollect driving when I was under six years of age. I had always to ride wherever I went, living two miles from the village and almost half a mile from the nearest neighbor; I had my own pony—a beautiful and very intelligent Canadian—which I often rode without bridle or saddle, guiding him with my hand or whip and controlling him with my voice; my mother kept fine horses and encouraged me to handle them; and my sympathy with animals gave me great interest in those handsomest and, with the exception of dogs, most intelligent of domestic animals."

They now came in view of a large brick house, with high, sharp gables in front and on the sides,

large windows with green shutters, and a piazza along the whole front, from whose floor rose six white massive columns to the eaves, supporting the roof of the same. The building stood about two hundred feet from the highway, and between it and the road extended a wide yard, in which was a number of tall, long-armed oaks, fresh and green with the half-developed foliage of spring. An open-work brick wall, six feet in height, enclosed the premises, as far as could be seen. A large magnolia tree, almost black in the shadows cast from the oaks by the setting sun, stood on each side of the gate, and there were two rows of dense cedar trees extending from them to the dwelling.

"How stately and beautiful a home! And at the same time how simple and home-like!" cried Eleanor.

"That is our home," said Margaret.

"And I was never told a word about it," cried Eleanor.

"Well," returned Margaret, laughing, "we have no guides or guide-books to give our visitors information."

Having reached the gate, Margaret descended from the carriage, and extended her hand to Eleanor, as if to assist her in alighting, but, in reality, as Eleanor knew, to accentuate her welcome, and the two women walked to the house. There at the head of the steps stood a middle-aged lady, dressed in black, a colored woman whom Eleanor recognized as her late attendant in her sickness, and, in front of them, a large jet black dog, whose long hair on throat, ears,

and legs could be seen, even at some distance, waving in the mild breeze.

"Well, that colt ain't kill you dis time, anyhow!" exclaimed Jane, the first to speak.

"No, indeed, Aunt Jane," answered Margaret. "He's a very good horse; you know, and you and mamma ought to give yourselves no uneasiness about him."

On ascending the steps, Margaret kissed her mother and presented Eleanor to her, calling her "My friend, Miss Field, who has consented to try two or three days of country life." Mrs. Mason shook hands cordially with Eleanor, and inquired whether she had enjoyed the behavior of Margaret's colt on the way. The serving-woman then advanced to Eleanor, extended her hand, and volunteered the information that the stranger was "mighty welcome." Mrs. Mason laughed.

"Jane has been very much your friend ever since she waited on you in your sickness. She was curious to see whether you had recovered the beauty that she says she knows is yours when you are well."

Jane giggled, and admitted the correctness of the statement.

"Now," said Margaret, as a small negro boy came bringing Eleanor's valise, "Jane will show you your room."

Jane snatched the valise from the boy, and led the way through the wide hall and up the broad stairs. They went on to a front room, eighteen or twenty feet square—to say nothing of a bay window ten feet wide and four feet deep—with a ceiling fourteen feet high, and ventilated and

lighted by two front windows besides the bow on the side. As the rays of the setting sun struck slanting the front windows and cast a rich, uncertain yellow glow across the room, it seemed to Eleanor that she had never seen an apartment so luxurious and elegant as this wide, lofty chamber with its rich carpeting, its silk-and-lace curtains, its graceful cornices, its delicate frescoes, its pale-blue walls and ceiling, its great blue-veined marble mantelpiece, and its large, rich mahogany furniture.

"Here's whar you'll stay," remarked Jane, in business-like tones, setting the baggage on a large marble-topped table in the center of the room.

"Here's your bath-room and dressing-room," she proceeded, opening a door and disclosing a smaller chamber. She then lighted an oil lamp, and, after showing Eleanor the bell cord, left her with the announcement that tea would be served in half an hour.

On descending to the ground floor, Eleanor found Mrs. Mason and her daughter sitting on the veranda and she sat down with them. The trees, the shrubbery, and the wide white graveled walks before them reflected the mellow golden glow of sunset, and all the air was scented with the perfume of hundreds of spring flowers which grew beside the walks and in narrow beds next the house. There was no sound besides their own voices, except the tinkling of distant sheep-bells and the subdued murmur of a gentle breeze that scarcely stirred the leaves of the giant oaks.

"It is a sweet evening," said Mrs. Mason—

"one of the kind that makes mere living something of a luxury."

"Yes," said Margaret. "If it were not for the rather heavy odors of the flowers, the atmosphere would be perfect. But they impair the freshness and crispness of the air."

"Oh, don't say so!" protested Eleanor, who experienced a sort of intoxication from the sweets complained of. "This amber air, that rich yellow sunset, these whispering trees, and this luscious breath of flowers, put us into the land of the Lotus-eaters, and make one feel life a luxurious dream."

"Tennyson's poem is evidently in your mind," said Margaret. "He necessarily selected the sunset hour for the scene he painted. But you recall that his picture has some grander features than are here—the stream, in which 'the long-leaved flowers weep,' and the 'craggy ledge' from which 'the poppy hangs in sleep.'"

"Certainly," returned Eleanor; "but while those features add to the landscape intended to be laid before the eye of the reader's mind, I do not admit that they would add to the charm of our surroundings—unless indeed we should add the murmur of a distant water-fall."

"Well," laughed Mrs. Mason, "I think you will have that, if you will listen a moment."

During the pause that followed Eleanor distinguished the silvery ripple and gurgle of a stream as it hurried over granite rocks in the depth of the forest eastward of them.

In a few minutes a tall, erect man stepped from the hall into the piazza, and slightly inclining his

face toward Mrs. Mason, said with as much solemnity as if announcing a most serious event, "Madam, tea is served."

"Well!" cried Margaret, "Uncle Scipio, you will get to preaching sermons before each meal if you keep on in this vein." The dignified individual thus addressed responded only by a bow, and then drew himself up to await the rising of the ladies. When they had filed through the open door he followed them with noiseless steps; and when they entered the supper-room, he glided past Mrs. Mason, drew her chair from the table, handed it forward for her to be seated, and then stood, motionless and straight behind her chair, barely glancing toward the other end of the table, as if to observe the deportment of a slender black girl who had placed herself behind Margaret's chair. When Mrs. Mason had said grace, Eleanor stole a glance at this stately official, as he plainly considered himself.

He was full six feet tall,—an unusual height for the full-blooded negro,—was very slender, very straight, and black as jet. His face was clean shaven, but his head was covered with a dense mass of hair, as white as snow. It needed no statement to inform her that this aged man was the family butler of many years' standing, whose dignity of office and person forbade any but a very limited familiarity. He did little waiting on the table. It was small enough for each one of the three ladies to reach almost anything she wanted; and the handing of plates, cups, and the like was deftly and rapidly done by the active waitress.

It was the old-time Southern supper. A

broiled half-grown chicken, a dish of small-hominy (as grits is generally called in the South), ground of flint-corn grown for that especial purpose, and white as the delicate untinted china that held it; a great circle of rolls, which sent forth a perceptible steam when the dish-cover and towel were lifted from them; biscuits, large, brown, light and flaky; mutton chops; corn griddle-cakes whose richness and delicacy taught the stranger a new value in the plebeian maize; waffles that were brought in every two or three minutes, hot from the irons, and so light and crisp that an anchorite would readily have eaten half a dozen of them; butter as yellow and sweet as ever Jersey cream supplied; coffee, rich with cream; tea which ought to have won even Hazlitt's admiration; milk, fresh from the ice; two kinds of light cakes, and a fruit-cake rich enough to kill any man or woman of feeble digestion—these were what the teacher saw before her.

She had often wondered, since her sickness, whether the world ever had known or ever would know again such broiled chicken as she then enjoyed. That she would never again find the dish so palatable she was well assured. Now, however, the matter became involved in considerable doubt; and she paused to ponder it, recurring, of course, to the circumstances of her sickness. Margaret observed her thoughtful appearance and remarked upon it.

"I was thinking," said Eleanor, "of the last time I ate broiled chicken in your company."

"At Mrs. Haxwell's. I had some amusement in preparing that fowl. Mrs. Haxwell expressed

herself in very funny language on the comparative merits of lard and butter in such cooking; and when I persisted in using butter, talked about the great waste of the valuable material—”

“On a Yankee *school-marm*,” injected Eleanor, laughing.

Scipio elevated his chin about ten degrees, and fixed a stare of unusual stoniness on the opposite wall, but whether in resentment of Mrs. Haxwell’s freedom of such speech or in scorn of school-marms of Northern origin, Eleanor could form no idea. The waiting-girl turned her head to one side and scanned Eleanor’s face with much curiosity.

“Well,” laughingly remarked Margaret, “she may have employed some such terms, but her language of protest against the ‘flinging away,’ as she called it, of such fine, fresh butter on one ‘little bit o’ nothin’ of a chicken,’ was what particularly struck me. Her remonstrance was so energetic that that hideous little servant—Polly, was it? Yes, Polly—ventured to mutter some words in concert, not well connected, but indicating that ‘rich folks’ could afford to waste ‘a power o’ things’ on their cooking.”

“Then you surprised three people,” said Eleanor. “Sick as I was, I indulged in all sorts of guesses as to how you had managed to get a broiling-chicken in February.”

“I raise them myself—that is, Mammy Jane and I raise them. We have charge of the poultry department here. Ducks and geese we have not raised in any great number; peafowls do not thrive under our keeping—we seldom grow more

than ten or twelve a year; but we never buy a chicken or a turkey. You shall see our collection in the morning. Scipio, tell Mammy not to feed the poultry to-morrow morning until I come out."

"Yes'm," responded the butler.

"You find that it requires constant attention, no doubt," observed Eleanor. "You know I, too, was reared on a farm."

"Yes. But both Mammy Jane and I are here almost all the time; and both of us are never absent at the same time. We introduce no new stock, and thereby keep clear of the diseases that affect many of the fowls brought to market. We have a fine range for poultry in the body of woods on each side of the yard, and in the field in the rear, almost always sown in grain. It costs little money, and requires no great labor."

"But do not birds and beasts of prey destroy a great many of them?"

"No. Sometimes a mink or a weasel becomes troublesome, and owls and hawks catch a few; but we manage to get rid of these enemies pretty well. I have a standing offer of twenty-five cents for each large owl, chicken-hawk, blue hawk, mink or weasel brought to me. Several of the colored men on the plantation are fond of shooting. They hunt the 'varmints,' as they call them, partly for the sport, partly for the reward. These rewards were first offered three years ago. At first our poultry came pretty dear; for the 'varmints' were numerous. But at the end of twelve months the enemies were pretty well exterminated, and we need now pay very little for the destruction of transient visitors and new settlers."

"You may follow minks and weasels to their dens, and dig or cut or smoke them out," said Eleanor, "but how about owls and hawks?"

"The hawks were sometimes shot in our very yard. But I have known Dave Mason and Bob Williams—two of our farm-hands—to stalk a large hawk for a mile or two—sometimes to watch the flight of a pair of hawks for two or three days—at this season—to discover their nest. Having found it, one or both of them—and others of the negroes, for that matter—either haunt the surrounding woods, and shoot the birds as they go to or come from the nest, or else two or three of them—or one, if he is selfish about it—will go to the woods before daylight, and shoot one or both of the parent hawks as they show themselves at dawn. The large owls are harder to find. But several of them have fallen before the guns of the men who watched for them, on moonlight nights around the yard; and others have been found by cutting down large, dead, hollow trees in the swamp—though I suppose at least twenty trees have been cut to each owl found."

"But how do the owls hurt? Your poultry is housed at night."

"By no means. Our turkeys roost in trees as soon as the young can walk the 'ladder-poles' into the trees in the back yard. Most of the chickens roost in the same way during the months of June, July, August and September."

Mrs. Mason interposed at this point: "Margaret, you will tire Miss Field—if you have not already done so—with talk about your hobby."

"Indeed, no," cried Eleanor. "I am very much interested. I expect to write my sister Julia a good deal of what I am hearing. Pray go on."

"Three large owls have been shot from the top of the chimney to this room," pursued Margaret. "One was shot in an oak just on the right of the front door. One was shot while hooting on the chimney of Jane's house. She, by the way, heard him and, by her own admission, lay in terror in her bed, with all her bed-clothes over her head, until the report of Dave's gun and his shout informed her that the prophet of evil was slain. I shot a very large hawk off a limb of a mulberry tree you will see in the back yard. He struck at a chicken, within thirty yards of the house, about twelve o'clock one day, while I sat reading in the library across the hall. The setter, 'Guard,' that you saw this evening, saw him and dashed at him, and caused him to light on one of the lower branches of the mulberry. No one was in the yard at the time. I picked up a small rifle that stood near me, and taking a good aim, as the bird sat motionless watching the dog, sent a ball through his body. I had him stuffed, and will show him to you after tea."

"Margaret is very proud of that performance," observed her mother, with a dry smile. "She told it so often two years ago, that William Huntley dubbed her 'the Hawkslayer.'"

From tea the three ladies went to the parlor. This parlor—corresponding with what is called in the South the sitting-room, the name parlor being generally used for the drawing-room in that section—was handsomely but simply furnished.

The colors of furniture, carpet, and curtains were entirely green and gold, except some pale pink and a touch of lavender in the carpet and rugs. The plastered walls were of a delicate lemon tint, and the high, elaborate mantelpiece was a white marble with yellowish brown veins through it. The effect, especially when assisted by the light of a large chandelier with several burners, hanging from the center of the ceiling, full ten feet from the floor, and diffusing itself over the walls, fourteen feet in height, and the large area of a room, eighteen feet by twenty, was exquisitely graceful, refined and delicate. And the furniture, generally light and slender in structure, with a large show of cane and willow work about it, and only three or four cushioned chairs, added much to the simplicity, tastefulness, and comfort of the place. The whole seemed to Eleanor the perfection of a sitting-room for a Southern climate.

Observing her interest, Margaret said:

"And this is another one of my hobbies, as mamma calls them. I arranged the furnishings of this room five or six years ago. Mamma thought them rather insipid—as they certainly are, if her drawing-room be taken as the standard of elegance."

"I like rich colors and massive furniture," said Mrs. Mason. "I will show you the drawing-room, Miss Field, and let you judge. But you will not see it at its best by lamplight. When you look at it in the illumination of sunlight you will see its full meaning."

"I hope I shall not be expected to pronounce

judgment between the two," cried the teacher, laughing and holding up her hands in deprecation.

"Oh, no," said the mother. "But you will form your own opinion, all the same."

With that she left them. Presently she called from across the hall that the young ladies should come. Passing through the hall, they entered a larger room than the one they had quitted—twenty feet one way, and twenty-four the other—lit up by a great hanging lamp of six burners, which blazed in circles of flame through pale pink globes. Here the colors were crimson, black, purple and orange. There were frescoes in large figures on the ceilings; heavy moulding over the great lamp and around the junctions of wall and ceiling; elaborately gilded cornices were over doors and windows; all sofas and chairs were of massive mahogany, some covered with the old-fashioned black haircloth, others with crimson plush. A large mirror, elaborately framed, stretched across the width of the great chimney, above the open fireplace and the huge mantel, and larger ones reached almost from floor to ceiling on the other three walls of the room. Immense richly colored vases sat on black marble stands in the corners. The bric-a-brac on the mantel were all of bright colors. The curtains were silk and damask—rather heavy, but luxuriant and costly. It was altogether a very expensive and solemn room, this room of state at Oak Hall.

"This is all very fine," remarked Margaret; "but one who has had to blink and yawn, as I often did in my girlhood, in this place, during the

proverbial *mauvais quart-d'heure*, and sometimes a *mauvaise heure*, before dinner, on a sultry summer day, learns a decided disrelish for these ponderous furnishings."

The teacher did not entirely agree with her young hostess, but she did feel that the daughter's taste was rather better than her mother's.

"I like things plain, clean-cut, delicate, and therefore simple," pursued Margaret. "Mamma loves the large, grand, and rich. I detest a mystery; mamma enjoys one. I love furniture and furnishings as they are comfortable; mamma fancies the costly and imposing. I would not give one of my willow chairs, costing ten dollars, for all the mahogany rockers in this room, costing three times as much. Mamma would not give one of her mahoganies for all the willow-work between here 'and the rivers of Babylon.'"

"Why 'rivers of Babylon'?" inquired Mrs. Mason.

"Because," answered Margaret, "it is there that the captive Jews 'hanged their harps on the willows'—from which I infer that the tree was abundant in that section."

"I fear you are not so imaginative as your mother," said Eleanor.

"I am not. I'm a very practical person. But I am glad to see that you enjoy mamma's room."

"I do greatly," returned the teacher. "It is just the drawing-room I have hoped to see in the South, corresponding with the brilliant sunlight, the deep blue sky, and the gorgeous hues of the flowers."

Mrs. Mason was pleased. She laid a hand on Eleanor's shoulder, saying, "I said, when Margaret told me of you, that I believed we should find you not altogether a stranger."

The evening was spent in conversation concerning books, the nature of the country, and plantation life. When they retired, Eleanor, escorted by Margaret, found her chamber opened into that of the latter. Her hostess, in taking leave of her, took her face between her hands, and kissed her, saying, "Good night. God bless you."

"God bless you and yours always," responded Eleanor, fervently.

CHAPTER XII

The teacher rose with the sun, as was her habit. In a few minutes Margaret called to her through the door which separated the two rooms, saying: "Alice is here, with coffee, and tea, and milk. I always take one of the three as soon as I rise. Shall I send her to you? If so, she will come by the hall door. How are you? In my haste to have you refreshed, I forgot to ask about your health."

"Quite well," answered Eleanor. "And you?"

"Very well. Alice will be with you in a moment. When you are ready, come to the sitting-room. I want you to see my poultry fed."

The maid promptly brought the morning cup, and soon Eleanor joined her hostess below. Margaret kissed her, and patted her cheeks, saying, "I think we shall see roses here again, before long," and then led the way to the back yard where many chickens, ducks, turkeys and geese, and six or eight spiteful peafowls, were clamoring for their morning meal. Margaret's arrival with the basket of grain created a general rush, and brought scores of pigeons, common, fan-tailed, pouters, and other kinds new to the visitor.

"What a collection!" exclaimed Eleanor. "I never saw anything like it, except at a fair."

"This is a good hobby, isn't it?" said Margaret. "But let us look at mamma's pets, the cows."

Passing to the fence that divided the cow-lot

from the yard, they saw six cows—two Jerseys, two Durhams, and two “scrubs.”

“Now,” said Margaret, “mamma persists in experimenting with milk kine. Those two black-and-white “scrubs” are of the common, unpedigreed stock, but which has been well cared for for three or four generations. They each give from twelve to fifteen quarts of rich milk per day. The Durhams give a little more, but it is not so rich. The Jerseys yield about the same quantity as the “scrubs,” and it is somewhat richer.”

“What do you do with all that milk?”

“We use a good deal ourselves, and use a great deal of butter, for cooking as well as at the table. We give three or four gallons of buttermilk to the negroes on the plantation, and the rest of it to the pigs. We sell several pounds of butter at Cherenden every week. Mr. Cogburn buys it. We are somewhat more thrifty than you expected us to be, eh?”

“I—I don’t know,” returned Eleanor.

“Never mind,” cried Margaret, tapping her shoulder lightly. “But you will find before long, my dear, that we Southern people are neither as proud nor as extravagant as we are generally supposed to be.”

They were now summoned to breakfast, where the fried chicken, eggs, cold milk, and sweet, yellow butter were all the more enjoyable for one’s knowing that they were products of the farm. Moreover, when Eleanor took a slice of uncommonly transparent, delicate broiled bacon Margaret informed her that all the bacon and hams used in the house, and a large part of that con-

sumed on the plantation, were produced there. While at the table she directed Scipio to order the two young horses, Oaks and Ruby, to be saddled for herself and her guest.

"You see," said she, turning to Eleanor, "I take it for granted that you will ride with me. I am obliged to go to the other end of the plantation, some time to-day, and I know that it will be more pleasant this morning than later. However, if it does not suit you to ride now, we can postpone your ride till the afternoon, mamma taking charge of you while I am gone."

Eleanor expressed her preference for the morning ride.

After a brief chat and "rest from breakfast," as Margaret called it, the young hostess attired her visitor in a riding habit, hat and gauntlets of her own, and then assumed a plainer habit herself. The two horses were by this time at the gate, champing their bits and pawing excitedly.

Eleanor felt her blood stir with a tingle of pleasure on seeing the beautiful high-mettled animals. Both were blood-bays, without a spot of white; tall, slender, long-necked and high-headed. Each of them required a stable-boy to hold him, and now and then one of them neighed and reared, dragging his groom almost off his feet. Observing this, Margaret said: "I see I shall have to discipline master Ruby somewhat. I have not ridden him for a month."

This Ruby was a wild colt, and apparently vicious. He stamped, twisted, tried to rear, bit at the boy, and lashed out a hind foot, now and then, in pure fretfulness. When Margaret ap-

proached him, calling his name and speaking some kind words, the brute nipped at her hand in no amiable fashion. Bidding his groom to hold him fast, she struck him sharply on his nose with her whip, commanding him to behave himself. He reared and snorted, but the boy swung his weight on the strong curb-bit, and pulled him down. Then he seemed angry enough to paw his mistress; but she stood right before him, eyeing him steadily and holding her sharp whip ready to repeat the punishment. The horse plainly had some recollection of former contests with her; for he made no effort to touch her.

Eleanor's horse, though very anxious to be off, was much more tractable, and when she approached him gave her welcome with a low whinny. He suffered her to pat his neck and shoulder, and even reached his nose toward her as if to return her caress.

"Oaks is a good horse," said Margaret. "You and he will be good friends at once. The only danger lies in being afraid of him, for that makes him very nervous. But he sees that you do not fear him, and intend to be kind to him. Mount from the curb-stone," pointing to a large block of granite, having two steps cut into one side.

When Eleanor was mounted, and Oaks showed a disposition to be quiet, Margaret called his groom to her, saying that she would mount from his hands while the other boy held the horse's head. She added that she was afraid the colt would hurt himself if carried to the mounting block. She then gathered the reins lightly, placed her left foot in the extended

palm of her attendant, and in an instant was erect in the saddle, waving off the groom from the horse's head. For an instant young Ruby paused, as if not exactly sure of the situation. Then, realizing that he was free from grooms, he rose half erect, and plunged forward with a great leap, throwing up his heels as his fore-feet approached the earth. Eleanor watched with no small concern. Oaks seemed to forget everything in his observation of his wild companion. Margaret was perfectly prepared. No movement shook her in her seat; and as soon as the horse was squarely on all fours she struck him three or four times with the whip, on neck and shoulders. Then he tried to bolt with her. But he soon found his jaws sawed with a rapid muscular force that evidently confused him. Then he threw up his heels, and seemed about to put his head between his knees—coming as near *bucking* as a blooded horse ever does. For this his head was lifted with a sudden jerk, so violent that it made his mouth ache, and at the same time his hindquarters received a blow that evidently burnt like a hot iron.

Finally, Margaret called to Eleanor that they might move forward, and at the same time directed the two negroes to open the gate for the dog Guard, who stood inside whining. Guard, at a wave of the hand from his mistress, dashed along the road in front, and Margaret and Eleanor followed, going into the country. After a canter of perhaps a third of a mile, which Ruby, after some flourishes, made in good style, they pulled their horses to a walk, in front of an ex-

tensive lawn, on the opposite side of the highway from the Mason plantation. This lawn embraced six or seven acres, was well covered with grass, and contained a growth of lofty oaks, without undergrowth, and trimmed high. At the other border of it stood a large frame residence, painted white and having green blinds. A colonnade of slender wooden columns, reaching to the height of the ceiling of the second story, enclosed all four sides of the building. There was no appearance of flowers or shrubbery on the place. Margaret informed Eleanor that this was her cousin William Huntley's home.

"It is handsome," said Eleanor; "but it has a stern, solitary look."

"It is the fancy of its present owner which makes it so," said Margaret. "In his mother's time there were a great many fine flowers, but William had all these cut away and uprooted just after the war, saying that forest trees and Dutch flower-gardens did not agree with each other."

"Who lives there besides himself?"

"No one except the servants. Of the ten rooms in the house he uses four—a drawing-room, a study, a dining-room and his bed chamber. His drawing-room is opened, aired, and dusted every fortnight, but at all other times it is kept locked, except when mamma and I go over to dine with him. Sometimes in winter a friend or two comes to shoot with him for a few days; but only men come, and he never opens the drawing-room to them. He was very fond of his mother, who, still comparatively young, and very beautiful, died before he reached his eighteenth year. In that room

there is a very fine portrait of her, which he prizes so jealously that he fears to have it exposed to any accident whatever. There are many articles in the house intimately associated with her. He looks over these things very often, when alone, his housekeeper tells me; but he seems to wish them kept from all strangers."

"Then he has a melancholy sort of life," suggested Eleanor, turning to catch a last glimpse of the white building as it faded from view into the surrounding mass of oaken foliage.

"Yes, but he is rather fond of solitude, and he is an industrious student. He has a large and valuable library, and he finds abundant employment in it."

Soon they came to a field where several negroes were plowing. Eleanor observed that almost every plowman droned a melancholy song—sometimes a hymn-tune, sometimes a strange combination of very long notes with very short ones in a sort of recitative, the like of which she had never heard except from men of that race, as they trudged past Squire Williams's at night. Every one sang his own air, and negro and mule plodded slowly along about in time with it. As soon as they reached the edge of the field she saw a man on horseback, some two hundred yards from the road, who seemed to be directing the work of the laborers as they passed him. Margaret's colt neighed shrilly; and then the horseman turned his face toward them. After a moment's pause he galloped his horse in their direction and Eleanor recognized William Huntley.

"How-dy'-do, Cousin Hermit?" cried Margaret, as he neared them.

"Pretty well, Cousin Gad-about," replied the rider, laughing and raising his black felt hat. "You are on the road as usual, I see. So she is taking you the rounds, Miss Field," said he. "Be thankful if she does not keep you out half the day, while she visits every field on her plantation and describes all the processes of agriculture."

"I shall be glad to hear her," returned Eleanor, "if she talks as well about farming as she does about poultry-raising."

"So you have seen her fowls, and heard her discourse on that department of industry?"

"Certainly," put in Margaret. "I only wish I could teach you something in that line."

Huntley had been watching the colt Ruby. He now said, rather seriously:

"I wish you had left that brute at home. You could have had my black horse to ride. I do not think Ruby at all safe anywhere; and I should not care to ride him myself over farm paths and ditches."

"As if you were a better rider than I!" retorted Margaret.

"I do not say that," said Huntley, "but any man has a better chance than a woman with a vicious horse on very rough ground."

"Don't be uneasy, Mentor," continued Margaret. "I call upon Miss Field to testify if I am a match for Ruby."

"I must say," said Eleanor, "that she mastered him completely just now."

"Very well," said he, "I hope he will not turn

the tables on her. When he does there will be a badly spoiled horse, and probably a badly hurt woman."

"Pshaw!" cried Margaret, whirling her horse quickly round, and then patting his high, arched neck. "Ruby and I are good friends now; and no doubt we shall remain so, eh, my handsome Ruby?"

"Well," said Huntley, "you had best keep a sharp lookout. Your horse, Miss Field, is a fine fellow—bold, ardent, full of activity, yet intelligent and affectionate. He will play you no tricks. But you will find him do better if you give him a slack rein. That curb bit hurts and frets him when drawn tight. I never ride with any other bit than a snaffle, except when I have to handle a beast like Ruby."

"Bye-bye," cried Margaret, waving her hand, and starting off in a gallop, and the two ladies rode forward. On looking back, at a turn of the road a quarter of a mile away, Eleanor saw Huntley at the spot where they left him, evidently watching them. She began to fear for the fearless rider beside her. A daring and accomplished horseman, such as Huntley appeared to be, and as Margaret herself said he was, was not likely to indulge in any but well-founded apprehension. And she recalled, with unpleasant sensations, Mrs. Williams's account of Margaret Mason's father's death. Yet they covered nearly two miles of the highway without accident or interruption, though galloping at the rate of twelve miles an hour.

Just after they turned into a narrow plantation

road Margaret's horse snorted loudly, and stopped to regard a man and a horse suddenly brought into view, some fifty feet away, by a sharp bend in the road. The rider was a small, pale, beardless, delicate-looking man, dressed in a white flannel suit, and wearing a very high-crowned silk hat, beneath which long, curly, sandy-colored hair depended to his shoulders. His horse came to a stand-still, and he himself sat staring at the ladies. When they arrived almost abreast of him he raised his hat with a most serious and elaborate movement.

"Why, good morning, Mr. Vaughn," cried Margaret. "I never saw you out at this hour before."

"Good day," responded the gentleman in a shrill voice. "I came early to avoid the heat of the sun."

"But," pursued Margaret, with amused gravity, "why did you have to come at all into these rough, dull roads through the woods?"

"Well, you see," replied he, mincing his words, "I wanted some of the wild flowers that grow along the border of your swamp just behind me and ahead of you; and I could not trust the gathering of them to any one else. So here I came, and here are my flowers," and then he opened a pasteboard box, and exhibited a disordered mass of yellow, white, and pink wild flowers.

"Very pretty," said Margaret. "Let me introduce you to my friend Miss Field. Miss Field, Mr. Vaughn."

Mr. Vaughn's large hat, which had not been

restored to his head, was waved most courteously to the teacher.

"A—a fine morning," remarked the gentleman, "for—for equestrian exercise."

"It is delightful," returned Eleanor.

"You are going over the plantation, I presume," suggested Mr. Vaughn. "It is charming to see ladies taking—aha! whoa, you beast! For Heaven's sake, Miss Margaret, keep that brute of yours from biting my horse to pieces!"

Margaret could not help laughing at the sorrel's awkward efforts to get beyond Ruby's reach, and his rider's jerking his legs to keep out of the colt's great, bared teeth. But she snatched Ruby's head away; whereupon he presented his other extremity to Mr. Vaughn's steed, and flung out a heel that barely missed one of the sorrel's front knees. Mr. Vaughn gave his horse a whack with the large switch he carried, and resumed his hat, saying, "I—I rather think I'd better move on. I—I'll drop in at the Hall after tea this evening, if you have no objection."

"We shall be glad to see you," replied Margaret, cordially. "I shall expect you."

"Well, a—a—good morning."

And then Mr. Vaughn's horse carried him away with a slow, swinging rack.

When he was out of earshot Margaret said:

"That is Mr. Marcus Aurelius Vaughn, the son of a planter who lives a mile from here. They were wealthy; but they have not much now except a large body of poor, exhausted land."

"He seems to be rather a delicate young man," observed Eleanor,

"He is. He is the youngest son and child of aged parents, whose other five or six children have lived in their own homes for eight or ten years. There is an interval of ten years between him and the next older child, in consequence of which—or rather in consequence of the age of his parents at his birth—it is said that his father proposed to give him the name of some scripture character who was the child of old age—as Isaac, Samuel, or John. One story is that he wished to name him 'John the Baptist.' But the mother, who retained a certain fondness for Roman history and Roman names, insisted on calling him after the philosophic Antonine."

"He was indulging in meditation, like his namesake, when we met him," suggested Eleanor, recalling the young man's startled look when he encountered them.

"No doubt," said Margaret, joining in the laugh. "He is given to that exercise. You may be surprised if he does not favor you with some of his philosophical reflections this evening."

"But he appears to be quite a gentlemanly person," said Eleanor.

"He is. He is a man of high character, and is well informed, and he is always courteous and refined with ladies. The trouble is that he was a spoiled, over-nursed, mother's child. He was never suffered to take the weather or rough it among boys; and he was dressed handsomely, and carried about among old women,—and very precise, solemn ones at that,—till it's a wonder that he is not an old woman himself. His mother—poor, rheumatic, half-blind old lady—calls him

'Aury,' in the very tone one would use to a three-months old baby."

"Pardon the question," said Eleanor after a brief pause, "but are not—or were not formerly—a good many boys in the South pampered in that way?"

"No. Many of them were pampered by having servants to wait on them, and by high living, and by being allowed to live idle, and tyrannize over slaves. But while these things made them indolent, and extravagant, and domineering, they developed in them only such faults as those I have just mentioned. An effeminate man was a rare thing with us, and is a rare one now. In cities they have them; but in small towns and in the country our highest born and wealthiest were and are, the most athletic, the most courageous, and the most positive people we have. The war of secession gave evidence of that state of things."

"I know," said Eleanor, "that you had most gallant and efficient officers—but the men in the ranks?"

"Our proudest and wealthiest were there. In the company of infantry in which my cousin William Huntley served as a private there were several college graduates in the ranks, and he and four others left college to enlist. I have heard him say that there were ten men in the ranks owning each over a hundred thousand dollars' worth of property, and several worth from twenty to fifty thousand dollars. The aggregate wealth of the company was, he says, about two million dollars. The seven commissioned officers they

had from the first to last were poor men—among the poorest in the company.”

“That,” said Eleanor thoughtfully, “accounts somewhat for the desperate valor of your depleted commands.”

“By the way,” said Margaret, “Mr. Vaughn is said to have been a good soldier. He entered the army at seventeen years of age,—in 1863,—and once clear of his mother’s apron strings, is said to have met danger and privation with very creditable spirit and fortitude. He was in the same company with William, who says that he bore everything well except mud and corn bread. They say he used to grieve like a woman over muddy shoes and soiled socks. But let us take a little *lope*, as we call it here, over this smooth ground,” and they dashed away, leaving Marcus Aurelius and the war behind.

They rode through a strip of woods to a large field where plows were running, and negroes planting and covering cotton. While Margaret was talking to the colored foreman there, Ruby became very fretful, and turned, and pawed, and pranced sidewise. Margaret quieted him two or three times with her voice and a touch of the whip; but the restless movements were soon resumed. At length Margaret told Eleanor to remain where she was while she rode to the other side of the field to inspect three or four hands at work over there. Then Ruby’s rider started him at a gallop, which was constantly accelerated, until the two were seen, tearing across the heavy ground at almost racing speed. In a few minutes they returned at the same gait, Margaret now and then

urging the colt with her whip. When they reached Eleanor the horse was wet with perspiration, and breathed loud and fast.

"I concluded to humor him," said Margaret, quietly. "I think he is quite willing to remain still now. A run of half a mile over such ground as this generally teaches a horse something. Now in order to get into the road yonder, which leads us home, we have to cross a fence. It is not as high as those around the fields, and is kept here to mark our line and enclose the pasture lands which extend over most of the lands around and between cultivated fields. The fence is usually about five feet high. Let us see if we can jump our horses."

On examination they found the rail fence to be only of the height expected.

"Do you wish to try it?" asked Margaret. "I can throw off two or more of the rails, if you wish, without dismounting."

"I wish to take the leap," replied Eleanor. "Oaks will find no difficulty in getting over, will he?"

"No, especially when I lead."

With that she touched Ruby, and spoke to him. He rose somewhat, but turned and refused to leap. By that time Eleanor was carried clear over the next panel by the active Oaks.

Margaret turned her horse's head and rode back twenty or thirty yards, and then brought him again to the fence at a canter. Again he refused, whirling so unexpectedly as to unsettle her in the saddle. The colt looked so vicious that Eleanor cried out:

"Don't try any more. I am afraid he will hurt you. Let me throw off some of the rails."

Margaret held forward her whip as if to stay her hand, and said, "He *shall* take the leap. Stand clear."

Then she galloped back forty or fifty yards, turned the horse's head toward the fence, and struck him four or five times with much force, and as fast as the blows could be repeated. The colt rushed frantically at the fence, but, pausing an instant as he neared it, he received two more blows. Mad with pain he plunged over it, and was scarcely landed in the road when he bolted ahead at full speed. The slacking of the reins for the jump had given him such freedom as to enable him to get the start of his rider—a very serious thing with a horse of his speed and temper. Eleanor stared in mute horror at his furious bounds straight across the open road to a dense oak-and-hickory forest beyond. But in that instant she could see that Margaret was self-possessed and resolute. She threw her force into a sudden jerk of the horse's head to one side, and pulled him back so well at the same time that he was stopped in his forward movement, and almost thrown on his haunches. Then she forced his head into the open road—in the opposite direction from home—and flogged him to his topmost speed. Eleanor saw that she was resolved to tire him; so she held in snorting and prancing Oaks as best she could and turned him the other way. Far up the road she heard the flying feet of Ruby for perhaps five minutes, then the sound died away. And afterward the sounds were renewed,

approaching her. Here now was a prospect of two runaways; for it was certain that if Margaret returned at this speed, she would not be able to hold Oaks. It was hard enough to keep him quiet now.

But the hoofs of Ruby sounded less frequently as he approached; and when he turned a bend some hundred yards away he had toned down to a reasonable canter.

"I am sorry I had to keep you waiting," said Margaret, quietly. "But Ruby had to have his lesson."

"I was alarmed for you," said Eleanor. "I saw nothing possible except a frantic run through the woods; and even after you held him in the road I was afraid he would bolt into the woods again."

"He is a high-tempered, obstinate horse. You have to show yourself his master, or he will soon make himself yours."

"But is it worth the trouble and risk that one incurs in breaking such an animal?" asked Eleanor.

"Perhaps not," answered Margaret. "But we have our fancies; and one of mine is for a high-spirited, fast, clear-footed horse."

At home they found Sarah Ann Jernigan, a stout, rosy-cheeked, black-eyed, black-haired young woman of perhaps eighteen years. Sarah Ann had waited for an hour to see Margaret concerning the trimming for her gown, for to-morrow would be Sunday, and that dress must be ready to be worn, with all possible improvements, to the village Baptist church that day.

Sarah Ann was in such a flutter that she did not

have the chance, as she afterward reported to her friend Malvina Neighbors, to observe even the color or cut of Eleanor's dress, or the manner in which her hair was done up. Her brother, "jist like a man," as she said, had never delivered Miss Margaret's message "ontil yisterday evenin'," and now but one day remained for the "techin' up" of that "lavender purple frock." She could not imagine why "men always forgits everything concernin' of a woman." She'd be "bound" that her brother never would "'a-gone and forgot a hunt or somethin' fixed for hisself."

Margaret proceeded to discuss the gown as it was—which the young lady had brought with her. Eleanor attempted to leave them; but Sarah Ann begged her to be so good as to stay, remarking, with a titter, that "clo'es was somethin' that concerned all women," and the "lady mought know some new teches from the Nawth what hadn't come this fur South."

Eleanor entered into the good-natured interest which Margaret evinced in the country-maiden's "clo'es," and soon found herself more than repaid by the hearty, simple gratitude with which all her opinions and suggestions were received. Then Margaret brought out the fringe and braid and buttons which she had suggested to Mr. Thomas Jernigan might improve the garment in question; and in a minute all three were talking at once. Sarah Ann "stood up," as she called it, for the original trimmings—mostly very red purple in color, with some crimson—profusely applied. But when Margaret showed one of her own gowns of almost the identical shade, and the

young woman took note of the graceful and harmonious effect of more subdued colors and shades of the same color, she admitted that the changes suggested would be an improvement. Margaret forced her to accept the trimmings first shown her, assuring her that they were of no use to her whatever, as they were pieces left after completing her own gown, and had lain idle for months. Then Sarah Ann was quite happy, until she thought of her hat.

"But laws-a-mussy!" she exclaimed, "what in the world am I to do about the hat? It don't match this here new trimmin' at all!"

Margaret had her describe the hat trimmings; and then furnished her with some remnants of her own hat trimming, consoling her, when they proved insufficient to dress the hat, with the suggestion that she might well retain on it all except the very "loud" colors, as Sarah Ann called the crimson and most fiery purple. The guest declined to stay to luncheon, and hurried off on her one-eyed, pacing, gray, flea-bitten mare, after "wishing them well" and thanking Margaret with effusion.

CHAPTER XIII

While Eleanor read that afternoon in the library she heard a thundering rattle on the front door, and then a vigorous ring of the door-bell. After that a voice at the door demanded of some one—probably the noiseless Scipio, who had glided in his felt shoes to answer the summons—“whar” Mrs. Mason was. She heard no reply to the question; but in a few seconds the voice inquired “whar” Miss Margaret was. Next she heard Margaret’s voice, calling the visitor Mr. Jernigan. The deep coarse voice of that farmer asked—in tones which could have been heard above the roar of a cyclone—whether he could borrow a mule to ride to the village. He was answered in the affirmative, and Margaret called to Scipio to bid John go to the lot with Mr. Jernigan and help him catch such mule as he preferred. Then there was silence again.

In fifteen minutes there was quite a bang of hard knuckles against the side of the front door. This call Margaret appeared to answer herself. Then a slow but very loud voice inquired if “Miss Margaret” could let the speaker have a dozen eggs, as the “preacher” was to take supper at “our house” that night. Aunt Jane was called, and directed to give Mr. White a dozen eggs. This done, the speaker scraped his foot on the floor, thanked “Miss Margaret” in a voice which shook the glass vase near Eleanor, and went away.

He was hardly gone when the front of the house was rapped smartly with some hard substance—probably a heavy stick. Jane was heard speaking to “Miss Atkins,” who wanted to know, in a very loud, shrill voice, “whar” “Miss Mason or Miss Marg’ret” was. Margaret evidently heard the words, for she was soon talking with the old woman.

“I got ouden bacon and meal and ’taters jist this evenin’,” cried the latter, “an’ I jist thought I mought *borry* some fum you all.”

“Certainly,” returned Margaret’s voice pleasantly. “How much do you need?”

“Well, I can’t say adzactly, for the mule’s dead lame, an’ it’s Saturday, an’ my son Andrew is poorly. He’s got a dumb chill agin. An’ you know the last chill was powerful hard to break. An’ the doctor, he ’scribed dogwood bark in whiskey. An’ the whiskey we got ain’t strong enough to draw all the strengt’ ouden the bark. An’ I don’t know—”

“Well,” interrupted Margaret, kindly, “I should think you could hardly send to the village for three or four days. I suppose, then, that you had better take a peck of meal, and four or five pounds of bacon, and a peck or so of potatoes. But you can’t carry that much, Mrs. Atkins.”

“I was just a thinkin’ as how you mought have some nigger a doin’ nothin’, and he mought—”

“Very well. Mammy, tell Scipio to get a peck of corn meal, a peck of sweet potatoes, and four or five pounds of bacon, and get one of the boys to go along with Mrs. Atkins, to carry them for her.”

The visitor was loud and shrill in her thanks, and then told a long rigmarole about the cause that had prevented her from returning the corn borrowed on New Year's Day, the bacon borrowed on "Washington's birthday," the flour borrowed "long about the fust of last month," and the lard borrowed this "Aprile." After a few minutes the supplies seemed to be brought, and the old woman went away, calling back that everything borrowed would be repaid "jist as soon as Andrew gits over them dumb chills o' his'n."

Margaret soon joined her guest, and Eleanor told her how she had overheard her visitors. Margaret laughed, but made no answer except that Mrs. Atkins was a poor, infirm woman, whose only son was an idler, and whose daughters had married penurious men living at some miles distance.

As the two walked to the front veranda, an old negro woman came hobbling up the walk from the gate leaning on a long, crooked staff. Eleanor remarked that here was probably another person come to "borry."

"Y-es," answered Margaret, "or rather to get something on the credit of poultry and eggs never to be delivered."

The old woman stopped at the foot of the steps, curtsied profoundly, and stared at the ladies.

"How d'ye do, Aunt Nancy?" said Margaret.

"Well, I 'clare, Miss Marg'ret!" exclaimed the woman. "You is gittin' puttier every day. I ain't know what dese young men 'roun' hyar gwine to do. I 'spec' dey is jis' gwine to git to fight'n 'bout who shall marry you."

"I hope not," returned Margaret.

"Well," resumed Nancy, with an air of intense seriousness, "I don't see how as dey kin go to law 'bout it. Ef dey could, de jedge mought settle de queshton. But den nobody ever heerd o' goin to law 'bout a young 'oman; so I 'spec' dey's got to fight over you. I never seen nobody keep on a-growin' more han'some every day."

"But here's my friend, Aunt Nancy. This is Miss Eleanor Field. What have you to say about her? Won't she get some of the young men excited?"

"She's a mighty nice-lookin' lady," replied the woman, rather patronizingly; "but you see I don't know nothin' 'bout her, so fur."

"Well," said Margaret, "she's my friend; and you must like her as I do."

"I'm 'bleeged to like your frien's, Miss Margaret," returned Nancy. "Ef I'd knowed you had a frien' wid you I mought 'a brung you some o' dat fine sparrergrass (asparagus) what grows at my house. But den you nuvver let me know."

"So you keep your asparagus bed still?"

"Yes, honey. I don't nuvver eat none of it; but Sam and me keeps it up, fur to sell. Mars William Huntley buys it putty reg'lar; an' den we sells some in de village. Only I don't sell you none. I jist brings it to you for a present-like. An' now I'm a-speakin' on it, I rickollects how I mought a-fotch you some o' them Dom'nicker fryin' chickens. Dey's better'n any you got. But dey wusn't quite large 'nough. 'Bout two weeks fum now I'll fetch 'em—six on 'em, all reg'lar speckled Dom'nickers."

"Very well. What do you intend me to pay for them?"

"Well, you see I run short o' flour dis mornin', an' Sam he got a misery in his foot, an' he couldn't go to de village. - So I ax you, if you please, to let me have 'bout five or six poun' o' flour, ontill de Dom'nickers gits big 'nough to eat."

"Very well," said Margaret, good-naturedly.

"An' den de bakin gin out right 'long wid de flour. An' I was 's'posin' you mought spar' me 'bout two poun' o' bakin."

"And the Dom'nickers will be large enough to bring me in two weeks?"

"Yes, honey, you knows dem chickens is a comin' hyar right straight two weeks fum to-day—don't you?"

"Of course. But we need not talk any more of that."

"Jis' so," cries Nancy. "But I was a wantin' dat lady, what is a stranger, to know dat ole Nancy pays de chickens whenever dey's jue."

"Very good. Go around to the back yard, and tell Jane about the flour and bacon."

"De Lord bless you! How's yo' ma, Miss Marg'ret? I s'pose she's doin' good among de neighbors an' sarvin' de Lord, like she's always been a doin'."

Nancy now took her way to the gate opening into the back yard, where, after a controversy with the dog Guard, and cries on her part of "Bless de Lord," she was, by Jane's audible interposition, rescued and carried on.

Eleanor saw now, for the first time, the Ameri-

can African in the character of beggar, and asked Margaret how often such things occurred with the same applicant.

"Oh," replied the latter, laughing, "she comes every month or so—usually with the request for a smaller loan than this."

"Does she ever pay?"

"She brings us two or three famished chickens during the year. But she is old, and her husband, Sam, is lazy, and they were family servants of mamma's father; and you know we cannot well refuse them. They belonged, after grandpapa's death, to William Huntley's father, and after his death to William. He allows them the use of a cabin and three or four acres of ground. Sam has a small cotton patch, on which he raises about a bale of cotton every year, and they have a garden, mostly of cabbages and beans. Sam borrows one of our mules, or one of William's to plough as he needs; and with those things, and William's pay for 'sparrergrass,' and other vegetables, and loans from the two households, they make out a living. William buys, at high prices, everything they carry him whether he wants it or not. The 'sparrergrass' being mentioned, I may say that William has the finest bed of asparagus I ever saw, yet while he gives away bushels of the vegetable every spring, he buys all that Nancy has to sell. I'll get her account of William, by the way, as she returns."

Soon Nancy, escorted by Jane and closely watched by Guard, came to the front, carrying the articles she had desired, and invoking blessings on Margaret Mason's head.

"Aunt Nancy," said Margaret, "have you seen Cousin William Huntley lately?"

"Lord bless you, honey, I ain't seen Mars William sence two weeks ago. Den I went to his house to borry jist a leetle bit o' meal an' a spec' o' sorghum."

"You got them, I suppose."

"Well now, I'll tell you. I did git 'em; an' 'fore God, I mus' tell de troof an' say he gin me mo' as I axed fur. But he gin me a sort' o' cussin' at de same time."

"Aha! And what was the cause of that?"

"Now, Miss Marg'ret, you knows Mars William. He's a mighty fine young man; but he will use cuss words."

"And you can't cure him of the habit?"

"No, honey. I tole him onct as how I had been a prayin' fer him to quit his wickedness an' turn to sarvin' de Lord. An' den you ought to a' heered him! Josh come up in de midst of it. Josh don't like me an' Sam overly much, anyhow; he's 'feared Mars William 'll think more o' us than he do of him—jealous-like, you know. Josh sorter tu'n up his nose. Says Mars William to Josh, 'Josh, what shall I do wid dis ole idgit?' says he. 'Break her head wid a stick,' says Josh. I tells Josh he ain't got no bus'ness in de matter. Josh says he's gwine to tell Mars William what he axes, don't matter what ole nigger in de qesh-ton. Mars William tell Josh—him a larfin' all de time, 'dough me an' Josh ain't larf a bit—he tells Josh he better bring him de mar' Delta, an' tie me on her back fur ride home. Delta standin' right dar, an' 'pears fum de looks o' her

eyes she knows what devilment Mars William fixin' fur me. Josh, he come like he goin' to ketch me. Mars William call Tom. I always did 'spise dat Tom. Tom come a runnin'. Den Josh ketch me by one arm, an' Tom by t'other. Den Delta, she went to chargin' an' snortin', jis' like she was crazy. An' you b'lieve me, honey? Dem niggers was jis' a-histin' me inter de saddle, and me a hollerin' fur true, when Mars William stop 'em, an' make 'em let me go. I did go, I tell you. An' what's more, I ain't said nothin' to Mars William 'bout cussin' sence; an' I ain't a gwine to, nuther!" And Nancy tottered away, muttering, "An' I ain't a' gwine to, nuther."

Soon there appeared a ragged, barefoot white boy, twelve or fourteen years of age. This youth—Abner Fant was the name of him—told a drawling story of a father "down wid de rheumatiz" and a mother "laid up in bed wid de pneumonia—or somethin'," and bröther Jim with a foot cut by an axe, and brother Joe with a sprained wrist, and two or three sisters "jist sick, an' no 'count"; and on the strength of such facts begged the loan of a peck of meal. Abner was accommodated, and then shuffled away.

"This is one of my reception days," remarked Margaret, placidly. "You see it is Saturday, and these people must tide over Sunday."

"It is certainly no holiday for you," returned Eleanor, "whatever it may be to your visitors."

"One becomes accustomed to it," said Margaret. "And it does not cost much."

"But," protested Eleanor, "do they ever pay back? I should not think so."

"Not all of them, of course. But some attempt it in a small way, and I suppose the most of them hope to do so."

Presently Jane came from the rear, stating that "old Ben—him at the gum-spring" had come begging for another peck of meal, as he had dropped his in the branch and lost it on the way home."

Margaret laughed, then replied: "Tell Ben that he must invent something new. This is the second instance of dropping meal into the branch, and both accidents happening within the last month. Tell him to go home and—keep away from the branch."

"That's 'bout what I tole him," observed Jane, giggling, and then she departed.

"What a foolish repetition!" exclaimed Eleanor, much disgusted.

"Why, yes," said Margaret. "The tale, though not believed, got him a duplicate ration two or three weeks ago, and he thinks it will work again. Do you remember a very small stream of water—about two feet wide and three or four inches deep—where we paused to speak of the luxuriant display of dog-wood blooms and honey-suckle, this morning? That is the branch Ben must refer to for it is the only water between here and his house. You know that one would hardly drop a bag of meal crossing the smooth, pebbly bed there. And if he did let it fall, he could have snatched it up in a moment."

"Of course," said Eleanor. "The old fellow is thoroughly dishonest. You ought not to have paid any attention to him the first time."

"My dear," said Margaret, smiling, "we must

make large allowances for these people. Their bondage taught them—as bondage teaches all men—to resort to all sorts of devices to accomplish their purposes. And besides, the negroes do not think they rob me and mamma by appropriating small things belonging to us. They think us very rich—too rich to be injured by even a great many small losses. Often, when I convict one of them of an actual theft, he tells me, as coolly as possible, that it ‘didn’t hurt’ me or ‘old Miss.’ ”

“They are strange people, certainly,” observed the Northern woman.

“They are. It is impossible to measure the average negro by any standard known among white people. Some of them are thoroughly honest—thoroughly conscientious. Some of them are most trustworthy to their former masters, while dishonest with all others. William Huntley has on his plantation one of the worst thieves in the county; yet William does not hesitate to commit to his keeping all sorts of property. He tells me that he has set baits to catch ‘black Nestor,’ as the negroes call him, but has always found him incorruptible. Now Jane and Scipio and the girl Alice here, and William’s Josh, and Caesar, and Caesar’s wife, Amanda, are all too proud of their ‘white folks,’ as they call them, and have been too much identified with us, to play us false. Many of them are roguish in small things, but honest in great ones. They ‘take,’ as they call it, trifling articles or trifling quantities, without regarding it stealing. Almost every cook appropriates a biscuit out of every five or six she cooks.

And so with the other things. Most of them scarcely understand the morality which absolutely forbids the taking of anything which is the property of another. They look to material results. In their eyes, taking anything of value is a crime, while taking a thing which the owner can well do without is no crime—no immorality even. And they will scarcely be better until they are educated to appreciate the nature of right and wrong as a matter of principle. But let me show you our gardens.”

After inspecting the beautiful and the extensive vegetable-garden back of it, the visitor said, “I think you must raise vegetables for the whole neighborhood.”

“Oh, that’s only the spring and early summer crop,” answered Margaret. “After peas, lettuce, radishes, and some more of these things are gone we plant more cabbage, and sow more turnips, and put in our fall corn and tomatoes. I have counted a thousand heads of cabbage here in October.”

After some further exchange of opinion on the subject of gardening, Margaret said, “I show you these things because I think you can appreciate them. Now be prepared to assist me when I shall hereafter propound questions which I take it for granted you, as a farmer’s daughter also, can answer.”

“But,” returned Eleanor, “how can I teach you? You have no doubt a well-trained gardener, and you and your mother probably know more than I do.”

“I do not feel at all sure. You may teach me a good deal about some things—strawberries,

raspberries, celery and so on. The trouble with us in the South is that we are too content to travel the track our ancestors trod, and too little disposed to study the theories and management of others. Why, I have not been able to convert a single person to the theory of Irish potato fertilization which William Huntley taught me two or three years ago. Everybody in the neighborhood, except him and ourselves, loads his potato bed with the nitrogen of the stable instead of ashes and other potash-yielding substances. In vain I compare our dry, mealy bulbs with the gummy roots of their gardens. The Jernigans say the difference is owing to the 'sile.' Colonel Tomlinson urges that we have better prepared land, though he covers the bed with pine straw as soon as it is planted, and so do we, and never afterward work it at all. Mrs. Atkins says, 'You un's gits finer *marieties* of 'taters as we 'uns kin buy.' And so, though for different reasons, they all move on in the same old groove."

"I'm afraid," suggested Eleanor, smiling, "that they will find you no conservative, at that rate."

"I love old things—old families, old properties, old sentiments, old ideas—provided they contribute to happiness, and harmonize with progress and intelligence; but I have no patience with anything, however ancient, which stands in the way of right thinking, or right feeling, or right doing."

This woman afforded Eleanor a fresh surprise every time she talked with her. This last one was not the least of the list, as the teacher's countenance plainly disclosed. Thereupon Margaret laughed as if much amused.

"So I have astonished you. I am very glad. You will gradually find that you and I are not so far apart as you formerly thought, my dear Eleanor—if I may so call you."

So saying, she laid her hand on the New England woman's shoulder, and laughed again, very gently this time. Eleanor took her other hand in both hers, and held it while she said, "You got very near my heart weeks ago, Margaret Mason!"

Margaret touched her brow with her lips, and said, "We shall never misunderstand each other. I shall call upon you whenever I think a friend can help me; and you must never hesitate to let me know when it seems to you possible for a friend to give you aid."

For an instant they stood face to face, one resting her hand on the other's shoulder, the other holding her friend's hand clasped against her bosom. It was a beautiful picture—the tall, stately representative of proudest Southern aristocracy exchanging pledges of love with the daughter of New England whose intelligence and character had won her way, over all the prejudices and traditions and antagonisms of perhaps three centuries, to a heart that lately seemed so far away. Then Margaret drew her friend's arm within her own, and they walked on in silence.

Presently Jane's shrill voice was heard clamoring for "Miss Marg'ret."

"I think," said Margaret, "that summons means dinner. I was about to propose eating some of these berries from the vine," pointing to the strawberries; "but that would affect our appetites."

The three ladies were closing their meal with a *demi-tasse* of black coffee when the hall bell was rung loudly.

"That was a ring vigorous enough for William Huntley," remarked Mrs. Mason, as Scipio went to answer the call.

"Do you expect him?" asked Eleanor, feeling no great pleasure from the prospect of meeting the taciturn trustee.

"N—no," answered Margaret; "but he comes over almost every day." The butler, however, announced that Mr. Vaughn had called.

"That is our Mr. Marcus Aurelius," said Margaret to Eleanor.

"Then you have met him, Miss Field," said Mrs. Mason; "and we shall invite him to join us. Scipio, tell Mr. Vaughn we are taking coffee, and wish him to join us."

"Yes," cried Margaret, "and let him understand that we are not to be refused."

Presently the visitor entered with Scipio.

"Good day," said he. "I—I just called to see all of you. I—I had dinner two hours ago; but Scipio was so very positive about it that I—er, er—had to come along with him."

"Take a seat, Mr. Vaughn," said Mrs. Mason. "Shall Scipio give you some coffee?"

"I—I suppose so," answered their guest absently, gazing first at Margaret and then at Eleanor.

"Perhaps you would like a plate of berries first," suggested Margaret. "I am about to return to them before finishing coffee. Who will join me? And what did you do with yourself after we saw

you to-day, Mr. Vaughn?" inquired Miss Mason, after she and Mr. Vaughn had been helped to berries.

"Ah—hum! Well, about the first thing I did was to dismount and pick up my hat, which was knocked off against a limb in my horse's frantic effort to turn back and follow your horses."

"You should not have worn a tall silk hat in the woods," suggested Miss Mason, demurely.

"To be sure," returned Mr. Vaughn. "I—I thought that myself as soon as my hat fell."

"Mr. Vaughn," said Mrs. Mason, joining in the laugh this simple statement caused, "I fear we shall never be able to make you a countryman."

"Ha, ha! I—I *don't* like some things in the country, as long as I have lived here."

"And what did you do later?" asked Margaret.

"I—I rode home—"

"And after that you rode over here," added Margaret, seriously.

"Yes," said Mr. Vaughn, looking foolish. "But I did something else, as I was going to tell you when you took the word out of my mouth. Miss Field, did you ever observe what a way Miss Margaret has of—er—taking the word out of a fellow's—er—mouth?"

Eleanor replied that she did not recollect having observed it.

"Margaret," said Mrs. Mason, "you ought not to take the words out of people's mouths."

"There now!" cried Mr. Vaughn, in glee. "Your own fond mother feels it her duty to—er—reprehend such a practice. So I hope we shall not soon have a—hm—repetition of it,"

"I beg pardon," said Margaret, "and shall endeavor not to offend in like manner again. But you will tell us what you did?"

"That's clever!" exclaimed Mr. Vaughn, with much satisfaction. Then to Eleanor, "Miss Margaret always makes the handsomest—ah—amends for any little accidental—er—discourtesy. Well—ah—I—I—where was I?"

"If I may venture a suggestion now," said Margaret "your narrative left you in the woods picking up your hat."

"Thank you—thank you. That was kind in putting the word into a—er—fellow's mouth. Well, I went home, trying to think of some attention to show your guest and your good mother and you. I—I—remembered that there were snipe in the meadows beyond our house, and—"

"And you hurried to the meadow, and shot a dozen or more snipe, and you have brought them to us," cried Margaret rapidly, while Mr. Vaughn, with wide-open mouth, stared at her.

"There you are again," groaned the gentleman. "Mrs. Mason,—good lady,—I wish *you could*—er—prevail upon Miss Margaret to quit taking the word out of my—ah—mouth!"

The two young ladies now broke down completely, and laughed heartily, and even Mrs. Mason had to bite her lips severely to restrain herself.

"Margaret," said Mrs. Mason, "you must not forestall Mr. Vaughn in this way."

"Ah—ah—thank you very much, good lady," cried Mr. Vaughn, bowing to the mother.

Eleanor now felt quite at ease with this queer little man with the long flaxen hair, and said:

"And what about the snipe? Did you hunt them?"

"My dear young lady," replied he, gratefully and earnestly, "I—I—carried my thought into execution promptly. I shouldered my gun, whistled up my dog, called Toodles (that's a diminutive young nigger that goes with me a good deal) and—"

"Can Toodles shoot?" asked Margaret, blandly.

"No, he cannot. You see he is only eight years old. I—I hope to—er—er teach him later."

"But one ought to begin early in order to make a good shot," pursued Margaret, apparently in great seriousness, fixing the delicate young man with her brilliant eyes.

"No doubt," assented the young man helplessly; and then sat staring at the face of his hostess.

Eleanor now regarded their visitor with much sympathy. She thought what a beautiful woman he would have been with his clear cut, delicate features, his transparent pink complexion, his large, deep-blue eyes, fringed with long dark, silken lashes, his mild arched lips, his penciled brows, and his fine, straw-colored hair, lying in half-formed ringlets upon his shoulders. She could have loved such a woman, for such a physique in one of that sex would have indicated the most refined and spirituelle type of aristocratic breeding. But such a man was to be pitied; he showed an effeminacy caused by ease, idleness, luxury

and super-refinement, a weakness surely not his fault.

"And how many snipe did you shoot?" asked Eleanor, sympathetically.

"Ah! Snipe! Yes!" answered he, withdrawing his eyes from Margaret and turning to Eleanor, with an appearance of great relief. "Well, I—well, how many would you guess?"

"I should say—twelve."

"No, no," cried Margaret, kindly. "That would be a large bag of snipe in this part of the country. I say eight."

"No," said Marcus Aurelius, sadly, "it was not even eight."

"Did you ever eat a snipe, Eleanor?" inquired Margaret.

"I think not. I should like to, though. Are they nice, Mr. Vaughn?"

"De-licious!" repeated he, clasping his hands on the table and sighing.

"Well," said Margaret, "I venture to say that Mr. Vaughn wished to kill some for you, Eleanor. Now didn't you?"

"My dear creature," exclaimed Marcus Aurelius, enthusiastically, "you are a mind-reader! That was just it. How you read my mind!"

"Then you shot six," said Margaret.

"No, dear lady!" sighed he.

"Five, then, Mr. Vaughn," suggested Eleanor.

"One!" moaned Marcus Aurelius; and then he collapsed in dismal silence, and perused the table-cloth.

Margaret dropped her tone of banter now, and sought to console him.

"But you brought that one to Miss Field, so that she can taste a Southern snipe? Mamma and I have often eaten them. So one will be as good as a dozen."

"My dear creature!" cried Mr. Vaughn, "how could one bring a single snipe?"

"But I thank you, all the same, Mr. Vaughn," said Eleanor. "You were very kind to think of me and exert yourself to give me pleasure."

"My dear lady," responded he, with much emotion, "you are too good. I—I—trust I may hereafter succeed in—er—contributing to your enjoyment."

The situation was becoming embarrassing and Margaret put a new face on matters by calling attention to the fact that Mr. Vaughn had no coffee.

As they walked from the dining-room to the parlor they heard dogs' growls on the front veranda. It was too dark to see the cause of such noises, but they soon understood, when a clear, steady voice cried, "Down, Guard! Behave yourself, Nero!" and they recognized the voice of William Huntley.

Margaret went forward to meet him. Eleanor and Mr. Vaughn did not hear the first words exchanged between the two cousins; but as Huntley entered the hall door they saw him hand Margaret something dark-colored, dangling from a string, and heard him say, "Here are a few snipe I brought you."

As Margaret, carrying the birds, passed the other two, Marcus Aurelius stopped her with a nervous inquiry.

"How—how many are there?"

"We'll count them," replied she, and counted. "Twelve."

"Twelve!" gasped that gentleman. "Huntley, *where* did you get all these birds?"

"The most of them in your meadow," answered the other. "I shot five or six on my own land, and then followed down the creek into yours."

"Why, I—I—hunted over my bottom for two hours from noon—and got *one*!"

"That accounts for the scattering of the birds," said Huntley. "I never saw more than two or three near together. What was the matter with you that you bagged so few?"

"Bad shooting," answered Mr. Vaughn, honestly. "I must have fired at least twenty times."

"It was an off day with you," said Huntley, consolingly. "We all suffer that misfortune occasionally."

"To be sure," assented Mr. Vaughn, eagerly. "It was an off day with me."

Margaret now rejoined them, and the four entered the sitting-room and seated themselves.

"Why didn't you come to dinner?" inquired Margaret of her cousin.

"Well," returned he, "I had a pretty fair dinner at home; I did not return from shooting till after six o'clock; and you know I have no great fondness for dining with people. There are three tolerably good reasons, eh?"

"Yes," said Margaret, rather dryly. "Three tolerably good excuses."

"I go to meals to eat," continued Huntley, incisively. "When I want people's society and conversation I seek them elsewhere than at the table."

I have never been able to understand why intellectual men and women should set to devouring food when they intend to enjoy the company of one another. It may do very well for animals; but I cannot think that so base an occupation can tend to promote clear thought and elevated sentiment at the time."

"Men have to be fed to be got into a good humor," suggested Margaret.

"Pshaw! You put a gentleman on a footing with a tiger or a hyena."

"But, my dear creature," put in Mr. Vaughn, "I always feel so *much* more comfortable and social after a good dinner or supper—or breakfast, for that matter. A hungry man is a ferocious animal. Ladies—the dear souls—are different."

"Now, Mark," said Huntley, "if the men would eat their meals at home, and shortly before going into society, would they not go to places of meeting in the proper frame of mind? And so of the women, if you will admit that they need to be fed in order to be managed."

"Perhaps," suggested Margaret, "you think that women are not better in such things than men. I confess I like to eat a little while spending a few hours in society."

"The very worst feature of dinings is the part women take in them. A man is expected to be more or less animal, and therefore one does not much mind even his gluttonizing; but a woman ought to be kept out of connection with such things. I concur in very few of Byron's notions; but I must admit that I agree with him in dislik-

ing to see a woman eat." Huntley spoke, for the first time, with an appearance of seriousness.

"Dear me!" ejaculated Mr. Vaughn. "I think it the sweetest thing in the world to see a woman pinching and nibbling at food!"

"Like a canary bird hulling one little seed at a time," suggested Huntley, smiling grimly.

"That's it!" cried Marcus Aurelius with enthusiasm. "And better than that, for the canary cannot sing while he eats, but lovely woman can chirp and twitter her prettiest notes while operating on the tiny bits she takes!"

"*Operating* is good—very good—very excellent good, as Touchstone says," returned Huntley, laughing.

At this moment Mrs. Mason entered the room, and Eleanor observed the change which at once came over Huntley's countenance. From being hard and somewhat cynical, the expression became at once gentle. He responded to her greeting "My dear William!" by rising and hastening to meet her. He took one of her hands in one of his, laid his other hand on her shoulder, and kissed her forehead, then seated himself close beside her, and conversed with her in a low, serious tone.

"He has not seen your mother lately?" asked Eleanor of Margaret.

"Oh, yes," replied the latter. "He was here yesterday, just before you and I came from the village. But he always kisses her, both when he meets her and when he leaves her. And he talks more with her than with any one else."

After a time Huntley rose, as if intending to go, but Margaret called to him:

"William, we have just been discussing cribbage. Suppose we have a four-hand game?"

"I shall not object," answered he.

The board and cards were brought and a small table was rolled out from the wall into the middle of the room. Then the question was raised as to partners.

"I should prefer Miss Field for my partner," said Margaret, promptly.

"Then, Mark," said Huntley, "I see nothing for us but to accept the challenge, and see whether two men can beat two women."

"I—I don't know what to say," cried Marcus Aurelius, nervously. "It's very unusual for two men to play against two ladies. It—it hardly leaves it allowable for the men to win."

"Never fear, my boy," returned Huntley. "If Miss Field plays nearly as well as Miss Mason we shall be safe in doing our very best to beat them. You'll have nothing to give away!"

"Indeed, indeed!" simpered Mr. Vaughn.

"Yes, indeed. In fact, I must request that you play a bolder game than you have heretofore done, so far as I have seen, or they'll defeat us shamefully."

"My dear boy," cried Mr. Vaughn, "I shall play a positively murderous one, if you wish it."

Then they began. Eleanor played rather cautiously for a time, being anxious to assist her partner as much as possible, and to study the other players. Margaret took a good many chances, and Huntley played the same kind of

game, though hardly as ready to take risks as his cousin. Mr. Vaughn was either timid or rash, and his frequent hesitations and half-audible calculations disclosed his hand several times pretty fully to Eleanor, who sat on his left. Once, after having been second in hand two or three times, he held a *five* until the last. Margaret saw his distress before that, and retained a five, for a speculation. At last she played it. Thereupon he showed his card, crying in a tone of triumph, "Ten—a pair!" Then Eleanor played her five, and called "Fifteen—eight points—nine points, as last card!" Mr. Vaughn fell back in his chair, murmuring, "Who could have expected that?"

The ladies worsted the gentlemen fearfully, in spite of Huntley's strong game, at once sagacious and courageous. He came near losing his temper several times, but finally contented himself with joking his partner. Marcus Aurelius minded neither reprimand nor jest. He boasted of every temporary gain, and explained away all losses. Eleanor thought she had never met quite so funny a man. He commented more or less on every play. Whenever Margaret scored points he exclaimed "Dear creature!" when Eleanor scored, he sighed, "My dear lady!" when Huntley scored, it was, "Good for you, dear boy!" when he scored himself he sighed, "Aha!"

Mrs. Mason was quite as much amused as Eleanor; but she always took Mr. Vaughn's part, saying, "Never mind, Marcus, you will get it right next time," or "Play your hand to suit yourself, Marcus." Mr. Vaughn invariably recognized her kindness by answering, "Thank you, dear Mad-

am," or "You are very kind, my dear Mrs. Mason," or "You know how to treat a fellow, dear lady!" When he and Huntley went away together he protested that he had the very, very sweetest evening of his life.

CHAPTER XIV

Sunday morning Eleanor attended service in the village with Mrs. Mason and her daughter. They heard Dr. Brown, in the Baptist church—the Dr. Brown for whose entertainment eggs had been borrowed the day before. The exercises were interesting, and the congregation, though not particularly well dressed, was well behaved and very respectable in appearance. Sarah Ann Jernigan was resplendent in her altered dress and bonnet, and gave Eleanor a bow and a smile. Mrs. Anderson was gracious enough to come to Eleanor after service, and shake hands with her cordially, and Mr. Vaughn fluttered about the ladies in his most airy style. Eleanor saw many men and women stare at her when she entered the church, and felt that most of the latter subjected her “git-up,” as Mr. Jernigan called it, to severe scrutiny; but while they manifested curiosity, no one seemed to treat her very differently from others. On the whole, the morning was pleasantly spent, and in the afternoon, as she insisted upon returning to her own lodgings, Mrs. Mason and Margaret carried her in their carriage to the “dyspeptic household” of Squire Williams.

The prospect was brighter now. The wall of ostracism and isolation appeared to be crumbling. She felt that she was beginning, if not to enjoy the sympathy of the people around her, at least to be allowed a fair showing. The approval

of the trustees had given her a sort of respectability; the marked attention of the Masons had satisfied all that she was fit to associate with the best. In a few days her pupils manifested in one way or another her improved standing in the community. They were more respectful in addressing her, more prompt in obeying, more attentive to all she said. She was now restored to health; and she was made glad by the cheerful letters she received from home. At her boarding-house she was treated with more and more kindness—though she had never anything to complain of there; and when she met the villagers on the street she was not so much stared at, nor given undue room. Not a few of the men whom she frequently met on her way to and from the school began to lift their hats to her. Even the mothers of pupils adopted a more friendly tone in the brief notes they wrote her about their children. One lady, whom she did not know, addressed her as “My dear Miss Field”; another, while requesting that her daughter be allowed to discontinue Latin for the present, stated that she was reluctant to interfere with any of her arrangements, but was compelled by the daughter’s delicate health, and concluded with the hope that the daughter would before long have the benefit of the teaching of so capable an instructress as Miss Field. And Mrs. Lubeck, the wife of Cherenden’s most prominent merchant after Mr. Cogburn, when she came in her carriage one day, to fetch her two daughters to school, alighted at the door and spoke very handsomely of the progress they had made under Miss Field’s tuition.

But over this suddenly and beautifully clearing sky there soon spread a cloud of much gloom and portent. It had its origin in the following matters. The friction engendered between the white and the black races by the emancipation of the latter became constantly more intense as time went on. Just after the close of the war the desire of the whites for peace and the uncertainty of the negroes as to their own political status combined to prevent any collisions between the two races except occasionally, and then only in consequence of purely personal differences. This peace was largely promoted by the system, generally adopted by the officers of military garrisons in the South, for the year 1865, of compelling former masters and former slaves on the farms to enter into contracts in writing, whereby the former covenanted to retain the latter, either as laborers or domestics, and pay them for their services a certain portion of the year's crop, usually one-third, and the latter covenanted to serve, in consideration of such compensation, until the close of the year. By that time each race came to realize its condition, and was able in a great measure to adapt itself to it. But the negroes asserted themselves more and more, sometimes in harmless noise-making, sometimes by shirking work, sometimes by what appeared to the whites studied insolence, sometimes by depredations on property, sometimes by robbery and bloodshed. The great body of the colored race conducted themselves quietly and attended to their work with as much diligence as could be expected from

a people of their constitution and antecedents, and the great body of the whites conducted themselves amicably toward their enfranchised employees. There was, however, in each race a turbulent, self-seeking element, consisting, among the whites, of idle, dissolute, often roving men, who insisted upon subjecting the blacks to their absolute dominion; and among the blacks, of sensual, malicious savages who sought to turn life into one gross orgy. These two elements, enemies as they were to both races and to all society, received little encouragement from either people, for some time; but, as has usually been the result in such a state of affairs, their actions gradually affected and implicated others of each race, until ill feeling came to be largely established between the masses on each side. At least it came to pass that the race prejudice was so strong that scarcely any white man cared to procure the punishment of a criminal who confined his misdeeds to negroes, and the negro gave himself no concern about lawlessness practiced toward the whites. The evil-minded of each race became worse than ever, and an evil disposition grew more general in each race. Finally, each race came to think that there was a complete natural antagonism between the two, that the crime of one member was in a measure the fault of all of his color, that retaliation might be practised without much regard to the means used, or to the particular person affected, just as one army fires at any soldier and every soldier in the opposing ranks. Such a disposition was far from universal on either side. There were a great many white

men who were conceded by the negroes to be peaceable, just, and kind to all about them; and there were not a few negroes who were known to conduct themselves with propriety. Indeed, a good many farm-hands and some town domestics remained for years with their former masters as hired servants or tenants.

The discord between the two races was largely fomented by those Northern men, commonly known as *carpetbaggers*, whom Horace Greeley so unsparingly denounced, and who flocked to the South soon after the close of the war, to make their fortunes. These adventurers soon saw, if they did not foresee it, that their gains must come through office-holding; they realized that they could never secure any office of value in States controlled by the whites, and that the opportunities for plunder would be many and great among a constituency who owned too little to be robbed, and who were too ignorant to detect a robbery. Such a constituency had to be created out of the African element; and it could not be created, or preserved, except by such conflict between the two races as would keep them completely separated in elections.

The opportunity afforded by President Johnson for the rehabilitation of the Southern States soon after the cessation of hostilities was not acted upon by the whites in the several States in a manner at all satisfactory to the people of the North. The constitutions framed by the several conventions—composed, in every State, entirely of white men—guaranteed to the negro little more than had been provided for him while a slave; and the

statutes soon thereafter enacted by the several State legislatures drew wide distinctions between the two races—in every case unfavorable to the negro.

Northern sentiment now demanded further action in behalf of the freedmen. The Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States had been adopted generally in the South, for that was but the expression of the well-settled fact of emancipation. To secure equal rights to persons of color, the Fourteenth Amendment was passed by Congress in June, 1866. No Southern State properly included in the Confederate States ratified this measure until about the close of the year 1867. In some it was not ratified until 1868. Virginia, Texas, and Mississippi did not ratify it till 1870. These ratifications, except perhaps in Virginia and Georgia, were brought about by the conventions ordered by military governors, for which such orders made negroes competent to vote, and in which they made them qualified to sit, and by legislatures elected by the votes authorized by such conventions. In a word, military rulers, backed by the army of the United States, made all male negroes twenty-one years of age voters, in defiance of all legislation until that time of force in the Southern States; such voters elected conventions favorable to the complete enfranchisement of the negroes; those conventions enfranchised that race; with their majority, under the management of carpetbaggers and their native white allies (known familiarly as *scalawags*), and supported by the garrisons in the South, the negroes crowded State legislatures with their

own people and their white allies; and thus it came to pass that the lives, liberty, and property of the whites were put at the mercy of negro legislatures, a judiciary chosen by such legislatures, and other officers elected directly by the same race. The ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment, putting the two races squarely and in terms on the same footing, which was proposed in 1869, was a matter of course with legislatures so constituted and so maintained.

Military Governors had been appointed by the General Government for every State in the South, soon after the close of the war, and garrisons of soldiers were distributed among several points in each State. Civil officers, whether holding over or elected by the whites prior to the enfranchisement of the negro, held subject to the power of such rulers, and in some cases were removed from office by them. The farce was ended when *Reconstruction* was inaugurated. Then the negro, manipulated by the scalawag and carpetbagger,—themselves the mouthpieces and agents of a vindictive majority in Congress,—appropriated the Government. Of course the military force behind him maintained him in power, as it had promoted him to it. Many a Southern white man regretted the abolition of direct military rule, hard and oppressive as it had seemed to him before.

Exorbitant taxes were levied in most, perhaps in all of the States, almost the whole of which fell upon white men; carpetbag white men, carpetbag negroes (for the North supplied adventurers of both races), scalawag white men, and the

native negro, divided all the offices and all the public funds among themselves; bonds of the several States were issued amounting to millions, and while the persons now in power appropriated the proceeds of their sale, the property of the former masters of the soil was made to pay the interest coupons on the same as they matured annually. Counties were plunged into debt for current expenses vastly greater than had ever been dreamed of before, and county officials who hitherto had scarcely a decent garment to wear, or a sound pair of shoes to walk in, dressed handsomely, drove fine horses, and feasted on princely fare. Great public meetings were frequently held, which drew the negro from every corner of the county, to march to martial music, make both day and night hideous with drunken clamor, and listen to harangues inciting them to assert themselves and avenge any wrong, real or fancied, coming from the whites. In many counties juries were drawn composed almost wholly of utterly illiterate field-hands—once indeed the trial of four negroes charged with murdering a white watchman and robbing a railroad depot was committed to twelve negroes, not one of whom was able to write the simple verdict "guilty" or "not guilty," or sign his own name. As might be expected, in consequence of such a state of affairs, theft, robbery, violence, and bloodshed among the negroes themselves, and by negroes against whites, became common, and now and then occurred that nameless crime to which the gross animal nature of the negro makes him of all men most prone.

The ill will, generally, of the white population toward the blacks which necessarily arose had caused many persons in other parts of the Union to take it for granted that all the combinations of white men which perpetrated violence on negroes were part of a universal secret organization. The fact that negroes were flogged or killed in almost every county in the South, either certainly or probably by white men, gave much color to the accusation, especially when it was considered that the whites had a common cause of complaint. But it was not so. The name Ku Klux, which was first used about 1868, and thereafter was generally employed to denote all white men who committed violence in darkness or in secret, was itself very misleading. There seems to be no reason to believe that the name was ever adopted by any organization, except so far as it was employed by persons here and there for the purpose of threatening offensive individuals in particular communities. The very origin of the word or words, if there be two, is extremely doubtful. Various and very dissimilar derivations have been suggested. The writer has conjectured that it was derived from the title assumed by, or attributed to, some unknown person in Tennessee, who was said to have presided over some secret organization formed in the eastern part of that State—that title being “Grand Cyclops.” It is not clear that there ever was such an organization, or if there was, that it had such an officer; but newspapers—white men’s newspapers—as early as 1866, perhaps 1865, published vague pronouncements signed with those two words, which were

said to have been found at various places. Such writings were evidently intended to scare negroes and their political leaders into carefulness in their courses. There was no general organization, it is safe to assert. All the investigations of the United States Government, all the trials of so-called Ku Klux in five or six States, all the confessions of culprits pleading guilty in the courts failed to furnish proof sustaining that theory. It is next to impossible that a hundred thousand men, or more, scattered over five or six States, should have been enrolled in one organization, yet no paper be found indicating the fact, no detective be able to ascertain it, no confessing member venture to assert it. The so-called Ku Klux Klans were the creation of the times and of local trouble. If it had been otherwise, we must believe that the operations would have been different. A general combination of the white men of the South in one organization for the suppression of the negroes would probably have struck such a decisive blow as was never dreamed of in any land before. That great number, composed of veteran soldiers and the maturing youth, could have slain in a single day or a single night a multitude compared with which the massacre of St. Bartholomew's night and the carnage of the greatest battles would appear insignificant. As it was, only a few hundred of the negroes lost their lives during a period of eight or ten years. And such an organization would have cut off the heads of the tallest poppies. As it was, few of the leaders among the negroes were hurt; and the greater part of the victims were stupid, plod-

ding creatures, incapable of exercising influence, charged with no offenses, and utterly unknown to the public. In many cases the death of a negro was traced to the hostility of a single white man; in many, the people of a whole neighborhood were at a loss to conjecture any cause. It was a common complaint among white men that squads, even couples, of rowdies brought blame on the people of a whole section by the killing or whipping of poor creatures who had done no harm.

But it was contended that the whites could prevent such violence, or at least bring the offenders to punishment, and that by failing to do either thing, they all became accessories either before or after the fact. Such a view of the case can hardly be argued until one acquaints himself with the circumstances surrounding the native whites. In a sparsely settled country, where a negro's cabin was often half a mile from any other habitation, it was rarely that any witness would be present in the dead of the night, especially if the man of the house was called to his door and instantly shot by one or two men in disguise. Sometimes a man was shot on a highway, and his killing made known only by the finding of his body the following day. The sound of a gun or pistol caused no inquiry in a land where their discharges were frequently heard both by day and by night. Firing was so common on the streets of small towns, that a pistol shot beneath one's window did not always elicit even a momentary investigation. Moreover, it was entirely in keeping with human selfishness and human infirmity that the people of one race should concern them-

selves little, or not at all, with the injuries suffered by another race which was, in one way or another, the cause of all their woes. Few men care so much for justice in general as to provoke the enmity of man-slayers by volunteering to bring them to punishment for wrongs done a troublesome and hostile race. How many white men have interposed between the Mongolian and his persecutors on the Pacific Slope? And how many of them have made an effort to protect the Indian from his enemies?

But the Congress of the United States decided that wherever (in the South) it appeared that combinations to deprive citizens of their rights or hinder them in the exercise of them were so strong that State authorities could not or would not protect the sufferers, such failure on the part of that State should be considered a "denial" by it "of the equal protection of the laws to which" such "portion or class were entitled under the Constitution of the United States," and accordingly, that the President might employ the militia of the State, or the Army and Navy of the United States, for the suppression of such "insurrection, domestic violence, or combinations," and make arrests, and turn over prisoners to the marshal of such district. That legislature further enacted, that wherever such combinations were so powerful as to overthrow or set at defiance "the authorities of the State and of the United States," the President might, "when in his judgment the public safety shall require it," suspend the privilege of *habeas corpus*. There was a proviso that the President should first make proclamation "command-

ing such insurgents to disperse." This was the Act of April 20, 1871. The Act of May 21, 1870, was of similar scope, except that it did not authorize the suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus*.

White men were occasionally arrested by United States troops, under the Act of 1870. Indeed the troops, under their orders, were to such an extent guardians and promoters of the newly established State Governments, that they protected the persons of State officers, stood sentry over State property, executed State processes of law, and in fact supervised everything in these States, and managed almost everything as suited themselves. Almost all persons arrested—perhaps all persons—under the foregoing two Acts prior to the close of 1871, were admitted to bail. Some of them were tried late in 1871 and early in 1872; some of these were acquitted, some convicted and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment, ranging between two or three months and several years.

The section of country in which Eleanor Field sojourned had been the theater of occasional bloodshed ever since the close of the war, most of the sufferers being negroes—some of them prominent in politics, some of them extremely obscure. All the county offices were held by negroes, or white carpetbaggers, or white scalawags. She had no acquaintance with any of these, and had never seen one of them, so far as she knew. Her taste and breeding rendered her averse to such society and it was also her determination to have no connection with any political party or

question whatever. Her only associates being among the native whites, she heard very little of public affairs. Cherenden was not the county-seat, and therefore witnessed little of the friction of constant occurrence between the opposing elements. She rarely looked at the county newspaper, but obtained her information of contemporaneous events from the Boston paper which she took and the daily New York *World* which Squire Williams received.

She observed one day, about a fortnight after her visit to Oak Hall, that groups of her pupils were engaged in serious discussion when she approached the schoolhouse, that there was an expression of preoccupation on the faces of the older children during study hours, and that the most of them spent recess in conversation instead of play. She made no inquiry of any of them, for it was her principle, as well as her rule, to leave them as free as was consistent with their duties; and they were not less studious or well-behaved than usual. But she felt assured that something unusual, and of somewhat general character, had occurred. And this conviction was materially strengthened by her observance of earnest conferences among the villagers whom she passed on her way home.

Mr. Williams parried her indirect attempt at dinner to obtain a clue; and she was too regardful of his and his wife's kindness and hospitality to press either him or her.

But she had her answer in a measure, when, sitting at a front window of her chamber later in the afternoon, she saw four armed Federal sol-

diers riding with four unarmed white citizens, all on horseback. She had never seen a soldier in Cherenden before, and it occurred to her that these soldiers had just made arrests; and her next thought was, that the arrest of citizens had been begun early that day, or the day before, and had caused the peculiar manner and conversation of her pupils and the villagers. Her heart sank. Here, she thought, comes a woful blight upon the young, fair hope just growing upon me! Now I shall experience ostracism, suspicion, misrepresentation, tenfold more intense and relentless than ever before; for now, though I am ignorant of what is done, and not connected with these things, I shall be inseparably associated in the minds of these people with every wrong, every persecution which they may suffer or fancy in connection with the imprisonment of their friends and kindred!"

So she sat, stupefied, until the voice of the serving-woman aroused her. "Miss Mason is down stairs, and wants to know if she can come up here."

"Certainly," replied Eleanor, rising, and recovering herself at the thought of seeing the one person of all the world who could and would assist her. "Bring her up at once."

In a few moments the young mistress of Oak Hall entered the room, came straight to Eleanor, and put her arms around her. The teacher's strength gave way, and she laid her head against Margaret's bosom and wept.

"Never mind," whispered the other, "you will feel very well after a bit. You have over-worked

yourself to-day. The May weather of the South is very deceptive—it makes one imagine one's self strong and fresh, but it soon relaxes and debilitates both mind and body."

"Oh, it is not work or the weather," moaned Eleanor.

"I know, dear," returned Margaret, gently. "But we shall talk about the unhappy matters going on yesterday and to-day; and I think you will very soon be as brave and steady as ever. Shall we sit on this sofa?"

"Wherever you please," sighed Eleanor.

Then Margaret led her friend to the old faded settee against the wall, gently compelled her to sit, then seated herself beside her, put her arms around her and drew her head to her own breast. For a minute neither of them spoke, while the Northern girl wept and the Southern girl soothed her with caressing hands.

Finally Margaret spoke. "You know that the Federal soldiers have begun to make arrests among our citizens?"

"Yes."

"They made the first yesterday—three young men living about five miles from here. They sent out a squad this morning before daylight, and just after sunrise brought in two others from a distance of eight or nine miles. After I came to this house, I learned that four more had been carried past."

"I saw them from my window."

"Well, these prisoners are for the present confined in the second story of an old store just beyond the hotel, the ground-floor being occupied

by the troops—a company of twenty-five or thirty men. I presume the prisoners will be forwarded to jail at the county-seat (the ‘court-house,’ as we generally call it) pretty soon.”

After a brief pause, Eleanor asked if any of the arrested persons were known to Margaret.

“I know Mr. Abner Ragwell, who was arrested yesterday—the son of a man who was my father’s overseer years ago.”

“Is he a dangerous man?”

“I have never heard so. He is a loud-talking, swaggering sort of a person; but the worst I have heard against him was William Huntley’s description of him as a man with a very large mouth and very little manners. Another one arrested is Thomas Brewer, a farmer scarcely twenty-one years of age. I have a slight acquaintance with him, resulting from his bringing peanuts (pindars, we generally call them), walnuts, and scaly-bark nuts to our house to sell. He indulges sometimes in threats to kill, but his homicides seem always to end in talk. William was notified two or three years ago that young Brewer had announced his determination to take his life—so Mr. Vaughn tells me. William’s reply, as Mr. Vaughn loves to tell it, was, ‘Let Tom Brewer alone, as I shall. You have no idea what a fine time he has imagining how, at some time, in some way or another, and in some circumstances or other, he might, could, would or should take my life. His chief happiness in life is in imagining such things. Let him enjoy himself!’ Mr. Vaughn added, in his most affected tone, ‘It

was positively sweet to hear the dear boy talk in this generous fashion.' "

"Do you suppose this Brewer could hunt up and whip, or shoot, colored people at night?" inquired Eleanor.

"I can't venture an opinion. A braggart is generally a coward; and work of that kind belongs to a coward rather than to a brave man. But I know nothing definite of Thomas Brewer."

"Has any one near you been arrested?"

"I think not. I have no doubt that a good many will be."

"But, perhaps," cried Eleanor, catching at any pleasant solution of the situation, "perhaps this thing is done *in terrorem* merely, and the men, if not clearly guilty, will soon be set at liberty. Don't you think that may be so?"

"No," returned Margaret. "I apprehend that arrests will be made indiscriminately and largely, and that most men will be kept in prison for some time. I suppose that, eventually, there will be distinctions made, and only those be prosecuted whose guilt is highly probable. But I am inclined to consider this arrangement a dragnet intended to catch all sorts of men in its reach, to scare others out of the country, and to excite and keep up universal uncertainty and dread in the counties now placed under the ban by the President, as this one is."

"But the men can give bond, and get released, can't they?"

"No; the privilege of *habeas corpus* is suspended by the proclamation."

"But they will arrest only turbulent, brawling

men, or those against whom there are specific and reasonably well-founded charges."

"I fear not. I hear that one of the prisoners brought in this afternoon is about sixty years of age and decrepit, who never was known to do anything else than stay at home and save money."

"But gentlemen,"—persisted Eleanor,—“I mean honorable and useful citizens—like Mr. Williams, and Mr. Huntley, and Mr. Vaughn, and Colonel Tomlinson—they will not disturb them, surely.”

Margaret Mason smiled sadly, and taking Eleanor's hand, said, “My dear Eleanor, we had best face this matter at the outset. There has gone through the North a great and terrible cry of Ku Klux outrages deluging the South in blood. The North demands that the newly enfranchised citizen shall be protected, and his wrongs avenged. It is thought there that almost every man here is more or less a party to every wrong-doing of that kind. It is therefore determined to terrify and subdue our people by wholesale arrests and imprisonment. I should not be surprised to learn to-morrow morning that any one of the four you have named was in prison—or all four of them.”

“It is dreadful to think of.”

“It is. But let me proceed to the matter that brought me here. I knew you would find yourself in an unpleasant position; for you would be sure to fear that, though as much a stranger to these troubles as I am, our people would, on the general principle of association, connect you with their affliction to the extent of entertaining a de-

gree of dislike toward you. Now I am determined that you shall not suffer in this way."

"God bless you, good Margaret!" cried Eleanor, fervently.

"You are under no obligation to me for that purpose. It is a plain matter of justice and duty—though of course it gives me additional pleasure to serve a friend. Now hear me. No one is likely to introduce the subject to you. If any one should, your tact will suggest to you to express your surprise on hearing of arrests (for you did not at all expect them), and your hope that before long we shall have peace and order and harmony everywhere. Such is your hope, of course—however long it may be before you realize it. But you will, probably, not be invited to give your opinion and wishes. What you have to apprehend is obstinate silence and non-intercourse—the form in which Southern communities practise ostracism toward women. You will encounter more or less of this, I must advise you plainly; and I suppose it is very irksome and annoying. But you must pay as little attention to it as possible, whether coming from tradespeople, or acquaintances, or patrons, or pupils. You will not be insulted—have no fear of that. Some drunken blackguard, or some very coarse woman, may make rude speeches to be heard by you. But you would not, here or elsewhere, care any more for the utterances of such people than you would for the barking of a vicious dog. And I feel sure that you will pay no attention to glum looks, or to dry answers, or to the reserved and perfunctory manner of your pupils. I hope I do not of-

fend you in offering this probably unnecessary counsel."

"Oh, no," returned Eleanor. "I am glad to hear you."

"Well, your own good judgment and your own taste would tell you as much perhaps as I have told you," resumed Margaret; "but I come now to the principal point. You must not allow yourself to be disheartened. I do not mean that you are in danger of failing for lack of courage or fortitude. I feel quite assured of your large endowment in both of those qualities. But I do mean that you are in danger of becoming discouraged from making further effort among our people. You have already been troubled. I know it without being told. Perhaps I have not done my duty—"

"You shall not say so!" exclaimed Eleanor, vehemently, catching her visitor's serious face in her hands and kissing her. "I will not hear you speak one word against yourself—my sweet, dear friend!"

"Well, well," pursued Margaret, taking her friend's hands and holding them for a minute. "But you have suffered, as any high-toned, self-respecting woman would. The sentiments of different sections of the country are so unlike, you know. But this is a severe shock to this community, and a very unexpected one, for all of us regarded President Grant's proclamation some time ago—ordering 'unlawful organizations' to disperse—as *brutum fulmen*, having no reference to any one here in particular, however meant. So you must make larger allowances for those whose

security is so much disturbed, and, in the case of men, those whose liberty is imperiled, if not already lost. You could train yourself to pity these people, could you not? I believe that your heart is large enough to sympathize in the distresses of mothers, wives, sisters and children of even convicted criminals. I suppose you could pity criminals themselves. And if you can do these things, I am sure you can forgive those who turn from you only because they are suffering at the hands of your compatriots."

"I certainly commiserate all who suffer or may suffer hereafter from this unhappy state of affairs," returned Eleanor. "You are right. I ought to keep myself reminded of the distress so many women and children and old men must endure; and shall endeavor to do so, instead of construing their manners or actions by my own selfish standard of comfort."

"I merely remind you," continued Margaret, "of such things. Hear now the culmination of my theory for you. You must refuse to see anything that reflects upon you. I think you will have little trouble at school. If you have, you have only to notify either William Huntley or Colonel Tomlinson, to procure the necessary support. You must know absolutely nothing about these arrests; you must decline to be informed. Above all things, you must refuse to know anybody connected with them, or to see the place where prisoners are confined. When you are in doubt, do nothing. And remember, at all times and in all circumstances, that I am with you. The strain will not last very long, I trust. With Uncle

and Aunt Williams you will have no friction whatever—as you know.”

“I am satisfied on that score,” said Eleanor, heartily. “And while I may not be able to do quite as you wish me, I shall remember what you say, and remember you, above all things.”

“So we are at one,” said Margaret, rising, “and now we shall go down-stairs and eat some of the strawberries I brought for you and Aunt Williams, supplemented with cake which Jane made yesterday, and forced me to bring you.”

Then the two descended the stairs, ate strawberries and cream and Jane’s cake, talked with faded Mrs. Williams concerning things that interested them and all of their kind, and parted just as the sun reached the top of the forest on the western border of the village.

Margaret Mason’s carriage was not well out of sight when two soldiers on horseback, guarding a citizen, also on horseback, came riding slowly from that direction. As the three moved at a walk in front of the gate, the man under arrest lifted his hat to Mrs. Williams and Eleanor Field, who were still standing on the ground where Margaret Mason had left them. It was Thomas Jernigan.

CHAPTER XV

Eleanor Field had few acquaintances in Cherenden; but most of the boys, some of the old men, and a few of the young men had gradually come to raising or at least touching their hats when they passed or met her, and perhaps a fourth of the ladies vouchsafed her a perceptible inclination of the head on meeting her alone on the street. The people of small villages, all the world over, have rather a hospitable feeling toward strangers, as industriously as they pick each other to pieces, and where there seems to be no occasion for hostility a newcomer is usually sought after if pleasant in appearance. The teacher's Northern origin had kept many of the citizens from her; but the frequent sight of her handsome figure, graceful carriage, and refined face had gradually softened the whole community toward her, and the cordial mention of her by her pupils and the acknowledgment of parents that she performed her duties agreeably and successfully, had contributed to inspire every one with a kind regard for her which required only a little more to ripen into as cordial a sentiment as she would have desired. On one occasion, just after meeting old Mrs. Hayblow, the chief fault-finder and she-dragon of the village, she had heard that acid female, who was horribly deaf and therefore spoke loudly, say to her companion, "I declare I believe that Yankee is a downright lady." But from the beginning of the arrests Mrs. Hayblow

scorned to concede even the existence of Eleanor Field, except by drawing in her skirts when they passed near each other. The young men now wore a half-angry, half-silly look, and either touched hats in a distant, perfunctory, and protesting manner, or else were attracted across the narrow, rough alleys called streets, or else were engaged in setting their watches, or reading something as they walked, or doing something which prevented them from looking at the stranger. There was an old gentleman whom she used to meet almost every morning on her way to school—very tall and spare, somewhat stooped, a little unsteady in his gait, who dressed in well-worn black, and wore a much-bruised high silk hat, but whose frayed linen was always spotless white, and his wrinkled boots bright and unsoiled. This aged man lifted his hat the first time he met the teacher, and continued to do so as often as they met; and he did so most gracefully, showing his long, snow-white hair. The arrests did not change him, only she thought, each morning, that the white head was bent rather lower than the day before, and that the shaking hand found more difficulty in reaching and replacing the hat. One morning, ten days after the arrests began, his hat slipped from his hand. Eleanor hastened to lift it and hand it to him, saying involuntarily, as she did so:

“Oh! sir, I am so sorry you should have dropped your hat in speaking to me!”

“Thank you, my child; and God bless you!” replied he, and fell into silent weeping.

Eleanor’s eyes were at once filled with tears as

she continued, "You are not well, perhaps. Might I not help you on your way?"

"Thank you, my dear; it is only an old man's weakness of mind." And then he continued his tottering walk. One of her pupils overtaking her in a few seconds, Eleanor, who had never before asked the name of a citizen, inquired of the child.

"Oh, that is old Mr. Watson."

"He seems to be in trouble."

"Yes'm. He's very poor they say; and him and his wife and his son and his gran' children all live in a little house not far out of the village. An' he has to keep books at Mr. Shorter's store, for a livin'."

"I'm afraid he receives little pay for that, as Mr. Shorter has only a small confectionery and bakery."

"Yes'm; but that's better than nothin', you know. His son's got three or four little children, and it takes what he makes, I s'pose, to keep them goin'. And his son—that's Mr. John Watson, what was a clerk at Mr. Lubeck's—he was 'rested and put in jail yesterday."

"Poor man! What had he done?"

"Done nothin', they say," answered the little girl, with a sigh. "Only put in there 'bout the Ku Klux things."

The next day, and nearly every day thereafter those two met again, and bowed and spoke to each other as before, but said no more than good-morning—except once, when the old man stumbled and dropped his cane just before reaching Eleanor. She ran and picked it up for him. "Thank you; and God bless you, my child!" was his acknowledg-

ment; and he looked as if he had derived some pleasure from the stranger's kindness.

There were fewer young men, or even middle-aged men, about the village after the arrests began; and fewer seemed to come in from the country. In the course of ten days or a fortnight almost the only white persons seen were women and children and the older men. Eleanor saw William Huntley once on horseback, and twice met Mr. Vaughn walking on the street. This gentleman saluted her both times in his gentle, affable manner, and the second time walked with her to Squire Williams's, but left her at the gate. Huntley only doffed his hat in passing at his usual rapid canter on the proud, high-stepping Delta.

The school-children conducted themselves with their ordinary diligence and propriety. Four of them—three of one family, and one of another—were taken from school. In the latter case the delicate health of the child was the reason assigned in a note of three or four formal lines from the boy's mother; in the former, nothing was communicated by letter or otherwise. She was compelled only once to refer to the situation among her scholars. A boy about thirteen years of age rather boisterously announced, in the school-room, that Sam Prince had told him to use his geography (the speaker having left his own at home) as he, Sam, was not coming to school that day, in consequence of his intended visit to the county-seat with his father, to see his Uncle George who had been carried to jail there as a Ku Klux. Eleanor suspected a feeler in this unnecessary detail, so she said, very quietly, but

with an emphasis unmistakable among her auditors, "That will do. Use his book. But, Henry, you will say nothing further in this school about Ku Klux. We have nothing to do here with that matter. I am here to teach; you to learn; nothing more, nothing less."

But to silence tongues was one thing, to control restless eyes and expressive faces was quite another. And in those features of childhood Eleanor read, daily and hourly, in the school-room, on the play-ground, and on the streets, things that went to her heart. The very atmosphere seemed imbued with a sadness which affected everybody. It was most touching in the younger children. The older ones, especially the boys, whose feelings were in great measure the result of information and their own reflections, gave indications of a certain resentment; but the very small folk, who could know little and reason less, expressed in their wistful faces only dismay and sorrow. No doubt all of the pupils were more gentle because their preceptress was so gentle with them; for in our early years we adopt in general the manner of those about us. But Eleanor was not aware of any change whatever in her language, or tones, or discipline, and she therefore attributed entirely to the sadness of the children the melancholy which had largely its origin in her own sad heart.

She knew nothing of the guilt or innocence of the men who were carried to prison; indeed, she had no acquaintance with any of them except the young farmer Jernigan and two or three clerks in village stores, and of them she knew very little.

But those men were all mild and modest in their bearing, and she could not think them perpetrators of midnight outrages on peaceable negroes. Three or four of the prisoners of whom she had a glance as they were marched past her on the street were untidy, ill-favored, scowling men; but so far as she knew, even these persons might be only poor and ignorant plowmen whose hard labor and exposure to the weather had roughened their faces and figures. But were the prisoners themselves ever so depraved, ever so deserving of punishment, her large heart, always inclined to the side of the unfortunate, pitied them, and hoped that they all might be found guiltless.

The saddest places of all were the churches. Eleanor attended service at least once every Sunday. She was glad to see, at the Methodist church, on the first Sunday after the arrests began, that her presence excited no open comment. It had been her custom from childhood to sing at service, and she had done so invariably at Cherenden, when she could secure a book, or recall the hymn—for she had learned a great many hymns at home. She possessed a clear, pure mezzo-soprano voice of considerable compass and sweetness, and she had cultivated it with care. She insisted always on the leading of the music by the choir, no matter how poor, and she adhered to her theory in Cherenden in spite of the wretched straggling and discord that characterized the performances in that village. But while she sang in subordination to the official hymn-rendering, she did so so accurately, sweetly, and earnestly that many a little girl near her was encouraged to add

her immature voice, and not a few ancient dames in neighboring pews were excited to employ in their Maker's praise shrill pipes which had long been in disuse. After the arrests began she was doubtful of the propriety of obtruding her voice on one of these congregations. But she ventured and she was well repaid; for after a sort of hush around her, and a turning of eyes upon her which she felt rather than saw, one, two, three, half-a-dozen or more, first a little girl of eight years, then an old grandmother, the mothers of all ages, joined in with feeling, till Northern woman and Southern woman lifted their voices in harmonious accord to the Father of all peoples.

But every foot of ground in this human territory had to be fought over, and fought over more than once. It was like wading through water which the foot can displace even in a rapid current, but which flows on again as soon as that temporary obstacle is removed. Or it was like beating the air—the air yields to any pressure, but the moment the hand is withdrawn the elastic fluid pours into its former place.

The school had to be managed by special effort; the church had to be influenced by special effort; the people in shops had to be conciliated by special effort—every one whom she met required a special effort on her part. And such effort had to be, in some degree, repeated at every meeting with any of the inhabitants.

The trial was too frequent and too long. Brace her nerves as she would, summon her courage as she might, bring her reason and her sympathizing heart to bear upon the situation as conscien-

tiously as she could, the pressure became almost unendurable, and many a time she could scarcely repress, even in the presence of others, a shriek of agony. Nor was the suffering confined to her waking hours. In her dreams she struggled with trouble tenfold more dreadful than the reality about her, and often in one night she seemed to experience a lifetime of ostracism, slander, persecution, and violence.

Once she wrote to her friend Mrs. Meacham, and received a very kind answer, begging her for a few days' visit, for rest and recuperation; but there was not a suggestion of any practical value. Her friend was accustomed to isolation from the inhabitants, so she saw in the present state of affairs nothing for a Northern woman sojourning in the South. She could not consent to afflict her mother and the rest at home with at all a full account of what she saw and heard, still less of what she felt. They therefore understood that nothing more was going on than the arrest, now and then, of some negro-beater or negro-murderer who ought to have been brought to justice long before. And thinking thus, they naturally offered no advice or suggestion. Finally she wrote to Rachel Norton. It was a shot in the dark, but Eleanor had always a high respect for that Puritan woman's intelligence and character, and she hoped for some suggestion that might prove serviceable. She wrote Miss Norton all she knew and a great deal of what she thought and felt, enjoining her, however, to make no mention of the letter to her mother, or sister, or

brother.' She awaited patiently the reply, assured that one would come.

The unfairness of women to members of their own sex has excited, and no doubt will excite, the amazement of men in all ages and localities of the world. It seems totally irreconcilable with the gentleness and compassion which distinguish women. A woman who will sigh over the worst criminal brought to punishment, who will deal tenderly with a thieving tramp or an isolent street beggar, who will interpose to defend a disobedient dog from merited flogging, will put the best person of her sex on the rack of inquisitorial scrutiny, will entertain almost any suspicion against her friend and neighbor, and will shut off all her sympathies from, and usually decline to allow bare justice to any stranger female. Women can become wonderfully loving with new associates of their sex on very short acquaintance; but till there is some sort of bond fixed between them there is nearly always a state of very stern non-intercourse, if not petty, distant warfare.

Eleanor Field's life in Cherenden had been not only blameless, but highly honorable. All who became acquainted with her admitted her worth. So far as the circumstances allowed, she had made friends. Yet to the female world there, outside of the small circle she moved in, it was apparent to her that she was the object of peculiar dislike. And it was only what she had expected. Now this antipathy became more marked; and not because any woman of the village suspected that she was less worthy than before, nor because any one suspected her of any complicity in the pro-

ceedings of the civil and military authorities. Men were prejudiced against her because she was a Yankee. When those who were thrown with her found her to be an intelligent, accomplished and ladylike Yankee, they became kindly disposed toward her, and when those who did not make her acquaintance saw that she was dignified in her manners and correct in her life they ceased to have any objection to her. With women, however, the case was different. When they knew she was a Yankee they set themselves against her, in a general, scornful way; when they saw that she was a handsome and graceful Yankee they conceived a positive dislike for her; when they found that she maintained her dignity and independence they thought her a very insolent person. When the United States Government set to arresting citizens they made up their minds that she was an intriguing politician, harpy, spy, anything that was odious. They did not wait for proof; they did not want proof; the thing was to them self-evident. She could not show that she was here for any good. Teaching was only a pretense. Of course no woman of any account would come all this distance for forty dollars a month. If so, how did she get that mauve-colored silk gown? Or that bonnet? Or those gloves? And why was she seen walking so often, and always alone? Once when a man suggested that Yankees required fresh air and exercise, like other people, the retort was that the speaker—a yellow, shriveled person who lay all day on a lounge reading novels—did not have to walk the roads. When it was said that she had never been seen to com-

municate with the soldiers, or with any other persons except the white citizens, it was answered that no one knew what letters she wrote. When it was stated that she would only injure herself by taking sides against her patrons, it was asked who knew but she received hundreds of dollars for giving information? One old crone was considered by her younger sisters to have settled the argument when she reasoned that there had been no arrests till after this stranger came, but that the arrests began soon after her arrival. "But," protested a man, "she was here more than three months before a man was arrested." This invincible old creature was thought to have demolished that objection by saying, with a sage shake of the head, that three months was not such a mighty long time as some young men thought it. The logic of the female mind was about this—that the presumption is always very decidedly against a strange woman, especially if she is young and handsome; that the favorable opinion of men only fortifies that presumption, because "men know nothing about women"; that a dignified and reserved demeanor is proof positive of a proud, overbearing and cruel nature, while conciliatory manners are irrefragible evidence of craft and hypocrisy; that women go to new places only to catch men, while those who stay at home are free from all designs; that Yankee women are too smart and mischievous to be trusted, anyhow.

But whatever the reasoning they happen upon—which is owing entirely to circumstances—the mass of women are set against strange women. It seems to be part of their nature,

They resemble the irrational animals which attack every newcomer of their kind. We see it daily, hourly, often several times in an hour, on the street-car or railway. All women expect it. When the new woman comes into the car, she sits erect, with eyes to the front, and staring into vacancy, as much as to say, "Here I am; proceed to pick me to pieces"—which is accordingly done. At the end of five minutes the new arrival withdraws her eyes from space, turns them upon her fellow-travelers, and forthwith goes to analyzing every one of them. When another woman enters one conveyance, the former one joins her late critics and assists in investigating this one. When a woman goes to a strange town she recognizes the necessity of the most rigorous circumspectness on all occasions and in every company, until she becomes fairly incorporated with the society of the place. She knows that she may safely be natural with men; but she knows that she must be always on her guard with women, and that the most trivial indiscretion, the most trifling mistakes in dress, speech, act, or manner, will be snatched up, harped upon, and handed round with merciless industry. The reason of all this is probably to be found in a regulation of nature—not so unreasonable when tested by its general effect. The sphere of woman is passive rather than active; her destiny is to maintain virtue, propriety of action and refinement of manners, rather than to perform great deeds; she is the conservator of good things, not their creator; and she is therefore to guard against all sorts of

people and elements to an extent not demanded or expected of men. In order to perform this defensive part it is necessary for her to weigh, examine, scrutinize every new person who approaches her social circle, and refuse recognition to every one of her sex until she gives proof of worthiness to enter and move there.

It has been stated that Eleanor Field had made some progress toward the conciliation of the female world at Cherenden before the Ku Klux arrests began. Unfortunately, she had only begun to mollify the opinion of her sex. She had acquired no positive footing. Wherefore, when they discovered the fresh, and to their minds potent, objection to her, arising out of the arrests made by *her* government, as they called it, among *their* people, the door which had been reluctantly opened a hand-breadth to her was positively slammed in her face.

CHAPTER XVI

But the measure of Eleanor's trouble seemed never full. There was, it appeared to her, a daily accession to the host of annoyances that beset her; for almost daily there was some person who looked or acted less agreeably than before, or there was some occurrence at the school, or in the shops, or in her walks, or at church that brought out a new phase of the silent popular opposition. In the midst of these accumulations there suddenly sprang up one, in a quarter where it was least expected, and whence indeed she had ventured to look for some little relief.

Four days after posting the letter to Rachel Norton, she was composing her mind with a novel one afternoon, when the negress of all work, the garrulous Nancy, entered, carrying a sealed envelope. Eleanor recognized it as one used by telegraph companies and she took it in intense apprehension. Always averse to displaying her feelings before strangers or servants, she held it unopened for a moment, while she inquired, in as steady a voice as she could command, whether there was any charge. The woman replied in the negative, and after pausing a second or two, left her alone. Then Eleanor opened and read.

It was dated at the village nearest her home, and addressed to "Eleanor Field, Cherenden," and it read, "I am coming to see for myself. Rachel Norton."

Eleanor sprang to her feet. She read the

words again and again. She held the writing near; she held it far off. She rubbed her eyes, and reexamined it. She laid it down and walked across the room; she returned and reread it. The words were always the same—as unchanging as Rachel Norton's face or dress. Certainly it was Rachel Norton's purpose to come to Cherenden. No doubt she was already on the way. That terrible old Puritan, who had no friends at home, was coming to Eleanor Field in the midst of her enemies. That person who had no conception of the word compromise, but fancied it to be the synonym of surrender; who understood conciliation to mean only flattery and falsehood; who had no heroes nor heroines except those who either beat their enemies into submission or died the death of martyrdom; that dreadful creature was coming here to hang herself like a millstone around the neck of the young woman already drowning in a sea of embarrassment and griefs.

"God help me! God help me!" she exclaimed, and fell upon a chair, half blind and altogether crushed.

She recovered before any one came to her—after how long a time she never knew; and she found the telegram lying on the floor beside her, the evening sun scarcely advanced beyond the point in the heavens where she had last seen it. Almost instantly the thought came to her, "I must go to Margaret Mason."

Without delay she donned her hat, seized her sun-shade and gloves, and hurried out of the room, and into the street. She had not proceeded half a mile before she began to regret her haste.

How could she explain to Margaret? What could Margaret Mason do, or say, that would help her? Was it not selfish to make such a call on her friendship? Why should she not go back, and await her fate, or run away, or do anything to get out of her difficulties? But to each self-addressed interrogatory there came the single answer—"Margaret has offered to stand by me. Margaret Mason never fails to will and do what is good and brave and wise!" So she went on, faster and faster, repeating this short creed in answer to every doubt and every fear.

When she reached the Mason residence it was just ten minutes past five. Jane answered her ring of the door-bell.

"Well, I jis' 'clare, Miss Eleanor," exclaimed the woman, chuckling heartily, "you jis' pick up yo' foot in yo' han', and come out here, lookin' as fresh as if you come outer a ban'-box!"

Eleanor, attempting to speak without agitation, inquired for her young mistress.

"I'm mighty sorry," returned Jane; "but Miss Marg'ret done rid down to de bottom half a hour ago. But old Miss is home."

Eleanor agreed to have "old Miss" notified. She declined to enter the house, but sat on a rustic chair on the veranda. Presently Mrs. Mason appeared, and made her very welcome, kissing her with her customary grave emphasis.

The conversation was desultory and unsatisfactory to both of them. Mrs. Mason knew that Eleanor had not come to see her, and knew that she had come on business of an urgent nature. Eleanor saw that Mrs. Mason was perplexed, yet

was unwilling to make inquiries which might not appear altogether courteous. So the two spent fifteen or twenty minutes in idle talk about the weather and flowers, every minute becoming more tedious than its predecessor. Finally, the situation became so distressing to the teacher that she was making preparation for departure, when she heard Margaret's voice in the hall, giving some order to a servant. In a minute the young mistress of the house stepped on the veranda, in her riding-habit. Her first glance at the visitor evidently revealed to her that something unusual had occurred, for she paused an instant in her progress and then walked rapidly to Eleanor and took her face between her hands, saying aloud, "You have afforded me a delightful surprise," and whispering in her ear, "Never mind just now. We shall drive directly; and you can then tell me all." After that the two took seats near Mrs. Mason, and talked about nothing.

In a few minutes Scipio announced that the carriage waited at the side door. Mrs. Mason declined Margaret's invitation to accompany them, but invited Eleanor to spend the night with them. Eleanor thanked her, but said it would be necessary for her to be at Mr. Williams's. Then the older lady kissed the younger one, and expressed the hope that she would come to them whenever she thought she might relish a day or night among the oaks.

The two young ladies had hardly started in the carriage when Eleanor cried:

"How could you know so much about the cause

of my visit? And how did you happen to come to my relief as you did?"

"Ah," replied Margaret, "mamma saw that you had something serious on your mind, and at once dispatched a boy on horseback for me. I suspected trouble when I received the message, so I ordered the carriage before I saw you. Now tell me, while John takes the long drive to Cherden."

Then Eleanor Field told her trouble, as briefly as she could, and without reserve. To her amazement, Margaret laughed, and for a moment she felt hurt, and showed it in her face.

"Now," cried Margaret, "I must crave your indulgence for a minute or two. As you outlined with your graphic stroke that stony-faced and antique woman, I could see her before me, and I could also see the stolid stare she would give you and me and all the world down here."

Eleanor herself was forced to smile when the vision of the New England spinster presented itself to her mind amid these surroundings. "But," resumed Margaret, quickly, and seriously, "you need not feel uneasy. I shall take charge of Rachel Norton the moment she reaches Cherden—or rather, when she lands at the station."

"You!" exclaimed Eleanor. "What on earth have you to do with her? She may insult you."

"Not she," returned Margaret, cheerfully. "I shall meet her at the station. I shall introduce myself to her, shall explain why you are not there (for it will be during school-hours), shall carry her to the hotel—where she will wish to go, of course—shall pay no attention to her silence or

dry speech, and shall satisfy her, if she is as intelligent as you think her, that I can assist her in accomplishing the object of her visit."

"She is a hard woman, Margaret. I mean she is stern, slow of thought, slow of apprehension, and set in all her opinions."

"Never mind. It is enough for me to know that she is your friend who is coming a great distance, at no little inconvenience to herself, to help you. That makes a bond between us, which she will soon understand. Leave all the rest to me. I shall come by Uncle Williams's after depositing her with Mrs. Anderson, whom, before then, I will tell about her, and give you a report of all that passes between us."

Eleanor's protests and cautions produced no effect on her friend. The plan, formed in an instant, was not to be affected by the hour's discussion they had. In vain were the hard features, the rough voice, the fixed stare of the eyes, the poke bonnet and the wide-skirted bombazine gown depicted. Finally, Eleanor had to admit that it would prove a curious and exciting experience for her friend, and let her have her way.

They passed quite around the village in pursuing the long way, coming into it by a road never yet traversed by Eleanor, and soon they passed an unsightly wooden two-story building, before which a soldier sentry paced, while five or six soldiers lounged about the door.

"That," said Margaret, "is the abandoned storehouse where the prisoners are confined until forwarded to the county jail."

Eleanor remarked that it was a dismal place.

"Yes; it was one of the first houses erected in the village—somewhat more than a century ago. People gradually built higher up on the ridge; and at last the old shell was left alone, to blacken and decay."

As the carriage ascended the slope of the ridge and approached the Anderson Hotel a soldier wearing lieutenant's insignia descended the sidewalk within a few feet of them. Margaret bade the driver stop, and addressed the officer.

"I presume you are the lieutenant in command."

"Yes, Miss," answered he, lifting his cap. "Can I serve you in any way?"

"I am Miss Mason," said Margaret. "I have sent two or three baskets of vegetables and other provisions to citizens under arrest; and I am glad to learn that you have seen to the proper delivery of the articles. I thank you."

The officer saluted again, and said, "I am glad to make them as comfortable as my orders and the means at hand will permit."

"I took the liberty of stopping you," pursued Margaret, "partly to thank you for such consideration, and partly to inquire whether there is any one of your men to whom I should direct a servant to go with anything I may send hereafter."

"Have your messenger to inquire for me, first. If I am at barracks I will see to the matter myself. If I am reported absent, have the sergeant of the guard, who is always on duty, notified. If he should happen to be out of the way at the moment, the corporal will see that anything you send is delivered to the proper person or persons."

I shall issue directions about it as soon as I reach barracks."

"Thank you."

All three bowed, and John drove on. After half a minute, Eleanor said, "I think that officer was much pleased to be so courteously addressed by you—but he was evidently surprised."

"He looked so," returned Margaret, placidly. "I wanted to show him that I appreciated his kindness in having the things I sent Mr. Jernigan and three or four others delivered to them promptly as John reported to me he did; and I also wanted to make sure of any future supplies receiving the like attention. William Huntley, or Mr. Vaughn, or even Uncle Williams, may be incarcerated there any day."

"Surely not!" exclaimed Eleanor. "None of them can be Ku Klux!"

"No," replied Margaret; "but several men, probably as innocent as they, have been arrested."

"Men generally believed to be quite guiltless?"

"Yes. They have at the county-seat now as gentle and harmless a lad as lives in the county—scarcely fifteen years old."

"What charge is there against him?"

"We do not know, nor does he. No information is given, no warrants are exhibited. No prisoner knows for what crime, or on whose information or complaint, he is arrested. Two, three, or half a dozen soldiers go to one's house, or meet him on the road, and inquire if he is so-and-so, and on his answering in the affirmative they tell him they are sent to arrest him, and so they proceed to do. Sometimes they take one who

denies his identity with the person they inquire about. Sometimes they prove correct, sometimes he does. A few days ago a corporal and his file brought a man from ten miles in the country, despite his denial of being the Jared Muller they sought. He was proved, after coming here, to be one Henry Walker. Then he was set free—with the very sufficient explanation that he was supposed to be the man they wanted, as he looked rather like that person.”

“But does this lieutenant authorize the men to do such things?”

“He probably knows as little about it as you or I. I hear that he receives a list of names of persons to be arrested. His duty is to arrest them, and send them forward. I hear no complaint of him. On the contrary, he is said to be very polite to his prisoners, and to allow them every privilege he can consistently with his orders.”

“This is terrible,” cried Eleanor. “I do not wonder at the feeling against everything and everybody that comes from the North.”

“No,” said Margaret. “It is very wrong for them to generalize in that fashion. Not many intelligent persons do so. But I agree with you, that it is not strange that ignorant men and women—especially women—associate people and things in that loose way. But cheer up. This will not last always. Let us see whom we are about to meet.”

Three school-girls passed on the sidewalk. The two ladies bowed to them, and the children, after a moment's stare, returned the greeting. Then they passed a group of old men. These also

stared, but lifted their hats. Then they met the Widow Hayblow. She stopped to have her stare; and returned Margaret's salutation with a puzzled expression. Eleanor did not look at her except from the corner of her eye. Mrs. Anderson was standing on the steps of the hotel. She hailed them with a hearty "Good evening." They met or passed several others, all of whom indulged in a more or less prolonged examination of the open carriage and its occupants; but all spoke. Lastly, as they left the business portion of the village, they encountered Mrs. Lubeck, drawn by two very tall, slim horses, and spread out in a voluminous pale blue silk gown. She already had her *pince-nez* on the Mason carriage when they came abreast, but gave the occupants a stately bend of the head.

Margaret left her at Mr. Williams's gate, after assuring her that she would meet the train the next day, and every day thereafter until Jane Norton arrived.

CHAPTER XVII

Two days later Eleanor Field found Margaret at Squire Williams's when she came from school. Margaret joined her as soon as she entered the house, walked to her room with her, and closed the door after them. The rest of the household safely shut off, Margaret burst into a peal of laughter.

"Whatever is the matter with you?" asked Eleanor, at a loss.

"She's come! She's here!" cried Margaret. "It's the drollest experience in the world."

"Miss—Miss—" stammered Eleanor.

"Miss Rachel Norton! And I have had a time of it. Such fun!" and then she laughed again.

"I am glad you can speak so cheerfully of it," said Eleanor, much relieved, and joining in the laugh in pure sympathy. "But what does she look like? What does she say? How is she? Where is she?"

"Oh, dear," cried Margaret, "don't ply me with so many questions. It is quite enough for any one of the least imagination to say that she is here."

"Wrinkled, tired, dusty, smoky, stern and antiquated!" suggested Eleanor, as the vision of the grim Puritaness rose before her mind.

"Antiquated is not the word for it," returned Margaret. "She's antique. She was old before Plymouth Rock was heard of. She is Methuselah's great-great-grand-aunt. She is the one relic

of the antediluvian world. I believe she was petrified before Adam was created. She belongs to the pre-historic race."

"And her umbrella, was it blue?"

"It was, no doubt, in former ages; at present it shows all the colors from the black lines along the ribs to the nearly white folding at the top. But I'll tell you all about it. I met her at the station. I asked if she was Miss Norton. She said she was. I told her that her friend and my friend, Miss Eleanor Field, was engaged in her school, and I had come to carry her to the village. Before I had time to give my name she asked who I was. I gave her my name. I then called for her checks, gave them to a drayman, took her arm, led her off the platform, put her into the carriage, and drove off before she could protest, argue, or even ask a question. The first thing she could say, as John whirled us along the road, was, 'Where am I going to?' uttered with a sort of gasp. I told her to Cherenden, more than a mile away. Then I took advantage of the position to tell her all sorts of things about you, and to inform her that I was carrying her to my home. Here she rebelled, and told me resolutely that she was going to a hotel. So I yielded, and carried her to Mr. Anderson's. I had previously told Mrs. Anderson about her—which prevented any surprise or friction. I went to her room at the hotel. I talked to Clarissy about what she was to do, ordered ice-water, raised the window-sashes, threw open the shutters, waited for her luggage, saw it brought to her room, told her you would come to

her this afternoon and—left her staring and dumb.”

“Did she appear at all alarmed?”

“Not she—only a little dazed. She seemed more afraid of negroes than all else. Did she ever see one before?”

“I think so. We have none in our neighborhood, but she was once in the South—years ago.”

“She looked at them. I saw her crane her body a good deal to get a sight of John, who, you remember, is very black. As we entered the village we passed a wagon full of field-hands, men and women. She stared at them with much curiosity.”

“Well, what is to be done now?” inquired Eleanor.

“You will go to see her this afternoon, of course. Leave her at the hotel. Tell her what you know and think. To-morrow I shall come to town and see her. Try to get her into the frame of mind to come out and stay with us a day or two.”

“With you?” cried Eleanor.

“Why, yes. I know what I am about. Let me see. Day after to-morrow is Friday. I want to carry you and her home that afternoon, to spend a day or so with us. Lead her toward the point. I will give her the invitation to-morrow.”

Then they separated, Margaret going home at once.

Eleanor went to the hotel immediately after dinner. There she found Miss Rachel Norton, sitting in her room, reading the Bible. There was no display of feeling between them—Eleanor

knew she could not venture, and Rachel Norton could not make such manifestations if she desired. They shook hands; Eleanor took a seat and asked after the people and things at home; Miss Norton answered all questions to the best of her ability; and then a silence ensued, during which Miss Norton resumed her reading of the 119th psalm.

Eleanor was a patient and self-possessed woman, but she was of too ardent and energetic a temperament to endure delay when there seemed to be no need of it. So, after allowing her friend to get through three or four of the subdivisions of the psalms, she spoke.

"Miss Norton, may I speak to you concerning the matter that brought you here?"

"To be sure," answered the old lady, laying the book across her knees.

"You have been very good in coming to see us—"

"Now, child," cried Miss Norton, "I must tell you that I did not come entirely on your account. I have been curious a long time to know how they live and do down here now, and I thought this was about as good a time as I could ever have. Now go on."

"I am afraid that you selected a very bad time for a tour of investigation. But you are here, and I shall take great pleasure in giving you any information I can. You talked somewhat with Miss Mason."

"*She* talked," returned the spinster shortly. "*I* didn't say twenty words. She is a very handsome young woman."

"Yes; and she is as intelligent and as good as she is handsome. She has been very kind to me."

"Did you know her before? Is she kin to you? Have you done anything for her? Did you have any recommendation or introduction to her?" queried the old woman, eyeing Eleanor keenly.

"To all of your questions, no," replied the teacher. "I came here a stranger; I went to work before I saw or heard of her; my health failed; when I lay ill, without a friend, she came and ministered to me."

"Humph!"

"I lay in bed in a humble boarding-house, where the proprietress had neither the means nor the knowledge to make me comfortable; when I had no food that I could eat, Margaret Mason—hearing of me in some way, I know not how—came to my bedside, fed me with wholesome food, gave me medicine, sat with me through the night, revived me with her sympathy, and when she had to go away sent me her own nurse to attend to my wants."

"That was strange and—good!"

"Nor did she stop at that unusual charity. When I recovered, her first visit after her own sickness was to me. She has since then had me in her luxurious home, where she and her good mother have made me always most happy."

"That looks like an uncommonly good woman, Eleanor."

"And when these arrests began, and people seemed turned against me; when I was distressed, and beginning to think that I must go away, Mar-

garet Mason came to reassure me, to talk with me and cheer me, and to carry me in public with her, so as to show her people that she upheld me."

The old woman laid aside her Bible, and clasped her hands upon her knees.

"She went to meet you at the station, of her own suggestion. She wishes you to be comfortable here. She tells me that you must come out to her home and spend some time with her and her mother."

"There is good, then, in Nazareth!" cried the old Puritan with energy, and forthwith she rose and took three or four turns across the floor with a rapidity that astonished her former neighbor. Then she resumed her chair and demanded to know more of the strange Southern woman.

Eleanor proceeded to describe her visit to Oak Hall, and dwelt upon the hearty and unaffected hospitality of mother and daughter, the poultry-raising, the overlooking of the plantation by Margaret, her kindness to servants, the devotion of the latter to her and her mother, her simplicity and sprightliness of manners, her charity to the poor neighbors of both races, and her avoidance of all reference to the ill feeling between the two sections of the Union. The old woman listened, without a word.

When the recital was concluded she said, "I must say that you have found a good friend in this Southern woman—" and then she sat silent for several minutes, staring through a window at the passers-by. Finally she spoke again. "I feel strange down here. I haven't seen a colored person for—a long time; and here three out of

every four people I see belong to that race. They are queer-looking people."

"They are good servants."

"I suppose so. But that driver of Miss Mason's is a very consequential fellow, and he's as black as ink."

"You find it comfortable in the hotel, I hope."

"So so. But the tea is very weak, and everything is full of grease. And I can't eat that cornbread; and those hot biscuits are the vilest things in the world. And then there's the dry rice—I'd as lief eat sawdust. But the water is good, and the milk and butter are good. I couldn't endure the chicken pie, with great big slices of bacon in it; but I did like the fried chicken, though I thought I would not."

"The people are kind and attentive, I hope. They were very good to me."

"Oh, well," returned the old lady, somewhat petulantly, "I suppose they mean well. But old Anderson is eternally bawling at 'niggers,' as he calls them, and his wife is loud and—free with strangers. That darky Clarissy is a big-mouthed, curious fool. She wants to know everything about a stranger from *a* to *izzard*. I told her at last to shut her mouth." And then the old Puritan's lips closed with a snap.

Eleanor told her that she would probably see a good many people and things here different from those at home.

"I expect it," resumed Miss Norton. "Your mother has sent me several of your letters to read. I concluded I'd come at last. Some

people said it might not be safe, but I was not afraid. I never was afraid of anybody."

No, indeed, thought the teacher; everybody has been afraid of you.

"The most disagreeable rascal I've seen," pursued Rachel Norton, "was a colored porter on a sleeping-car. He looked like he thought everybody belonged to him. He made me pay a dollar for a breakfast not worth twenty-five cents; and when I complained he said that was the invariable charge—and said it with all sorts of airs, and a sort of simper, as if I was green—or something."

As it was now near sunset, Eleanor proposed a walk. Her friend acceded promptly, admitting that she was anxious to explore "this here village." They went to the schoolhouse by a back street, came by another back street past the ruins of the Episcopal church, then by the Presbyterian church, then by the store-house where the prisoners were confined, and back to the hotel, through the main street of the town. The old lady admired the flowers and luxuriant vines which she saw about the yards, but she scolded over the want of paint, the rude appearance of fences, and the rough streets and sidewalks. She observed the inhabitants with close scrutiny, sneered at the idlers congregated at the doors of stores, glared savagely at two old white drunkards who reeled past her, and inspected with interest groups of barefoot negro children.

Miss Norton returned to the hotel rather out of temper. She saw that not a woman bowed to Eleanor, and that the few men who recognized her did so distantly, and stared at herself. Eleanor

parted from her friend in rather low spirits. The old soul answered ungraciously to Mrs. Williams's message that she would call on her the next morning; and grumbled when the teacher repeated that Miss Mason would call for her, to take her to Oak Hall with Eleanor, the next afternoon. But there was no use in arguing with her, so Eleanor left her a little before dark, and went home, regretting more than ever that her friend had come.

In this year of 1872 the 10th day of May, the Memorial Day in the South, was on Friday, and it was also the day appointed by Margaret Mason for carrying Eleanor Field and Rachel Norton to Oak Hall. As is well known, the 10th of May was selected by the people of most of the Southern States at the close of the war for rendering a tribute to the men who lost their lives in defending the cause of Southern independence. The inhabitants of that section, without regard to their personal antecedents, or to their relations to the Federal Government or toward the peoples of other States, concurred in holding it their duty to the many who had perished in an effort to maintain the Southern Confederacy, to recognize their devotion by placing decorations on the graves of such of them as were buried in the South, and by employing such ceremonies as would indicate their grateful recollection of all who participated in the four years' sacrifice. That day was selected on account of its being the anniversary of the death of Gen. Thomas J. Jackson, commonly known as Stonewall Jackson, who,

more than any other slain in the great struggle, was considered the exemplar of Southern valor and Southern character.

The exercises on this occasion, in the cities, were imposing. All places of business were closed, all vocations were suspended. Old men and young, veterans and civilians, women and children, assembled at some appointed spot, and moved thence in slow and solemn procession, sometimes with the accompaniment of mournful martial music, but usually with the sole accompaniment of tolling bells, to the public cemeteries or to graveyards where their dead lay. Sometimes an oration was delivered in commemoration of the dead; but most times there was no verbal expression of the common sorrow except in brief prayer at the burial-grounds. Families vied with one another in the beauty and profusion of the ornaments they bestowed on the dead; but there was no effort to do greater honor to one soldier than to another, the common purpose being to merge all distinctions in the common cause for which all suffered. The private soldier received as rare and costly garlands as the general officer; and the stranger was honored equally with him whom a whole county had known and loved.

Nor were these decorations then, nor are they now, confined to Southern dead. The graves of Federal soldiers who died and were buried in Southern towns shared with their antagonists the tributes to valor and patriotism; and not seldom a mother, after placing a garland on the tomb of her dead son, laid a wreath around the head-board

that marked the last resting-place of a Union soldier.

It was a day of lamentation for the bereavements of the Civil War; a day of grief, not of anger; a day for honoring high aspirations and unselfish devotion, not for crimination or revenge.

If Rachel Norton had known the people of the South as Eleanor Field had learned to know them, she would not have closed her window-blinds and sat moodily watching through them the crowd that moved to the village graveyard.

It was agreed in Cherenden that there should be no speech-making or procession that day, but it was arranged that on the tolling of the church bells, at four o'clock in the afternoon, all who desired to join in the tribute to the dead should proceed, in such manner as pleased each one, to the common burial-ground, where, after a prayer, floral offerings were to be placed upon graves according to the pleasure of the giver. Thence any who might desire to do the same at other burial places should repair to such places as they might prefer.

A few minutes before the hoarse old bell in the spire of the Methodist church began to peal, Margaret Mason and her mother came to Mrs. Williams's in their carriage, and invited Mrs. Williams and the teacher to ride with them to the village graveyard. Already children in small groups were seen, carrying wreaths and bouquets, and moving in that direction. There was no sound of labor in the village; the warm air of spring seemed itself to have become quieted into an unusual calm.

Just within the gate of the cemetery quite a number of persons were gathered when the Mason equipage halted near by; and after a few minutes Mr. Johnson offered a brief prayer, whose substance was a supplication for consolation to the bereaved and an invocation of divine guidance in the future. There was no reference to the contest in which the dead had fallen, beyond the mere description of them as giving their lives at the call of their people and for a cause they deemed righteous. Eleanor took part in the distribution of flowers and evergreens, accompanying Margaret closely. No one appeared to feel either surprise or displeasure at her presence; indeed, when she offered a bouquet to an old lady who seemed to lack something to complete the decoration of a grave beside which she stood, it was accepted with a sob of thanks, and promptly placed among others.

In one square, at some distance from the entrance, there were two graves, marked by head-boards, on which were scrawled some characters not legible to the teacher's eye. When they came to these, Margaret Mason whispered, "These are the graves of two Federal soldiers, who were killed in a cavalry skirmish, just outside the village, about the close of the war. I always assist in decorating them, and shall do so now; but do not join me; stay here. *Your* participation might not be understood by prejudiced persons."

Then she laid flowers upon the grassy mounds, and hung garlands on the two head-boards, four other ladies joining her in these offerings.

Mrs. Mason, Margaret, Mrs. Williams, and

Eleanor were among the last to leave the graveyard. They drove thence to the old Episcopal churchyard, where they found, or were afterwards joined by, thirty or forty persons. There were not many soldiers' graves here, but the scene was more solemn and impressive than in the more open ground of the cemetery, the granite ruins of the church, the wide-spreading and low-dropping boughs of the aged oaks, and the gray, quaint monuments lending strange, deep somberness to the silent ceremony.

Later they drove to Squire Williams's, and left Mrs. Williams at her gate. Then they went to the hotel, to fetch Miss Rachel Norton. Eleanor protested against the attempt, but Margaret declared that she would take the spinster to Oak Hall that evening or know the reason why not. Eleanor remained in the carriage while Margaret and her mother called on the lady.

To her surprise, she beheld, in about ten minutes, the figures of the three ladies coming through the hotel. Mrs. Mason was in advance, carrying what proved to be Miss Norton's "grip," and Margaret, grasping the well known umbrella, followed, "convoying," as she afterward called it, the aged tourist down steep stairs and through the ill-lighted hall of the hotel. The term seemed appropriate; for the two moving together were not unlike a trim modern steamer escorting an old whaler after its long voyage amid the storms and icebergs of arctic seas.

As they drove through the village the people stared wonderingly at the carriage; and Miss Norton glared defiantly at them. She opened her

lips but once during the drive to Oak Hall—which was in passing a field of grain, when she remarked, “That wheat’s mighty for’ard!”

CHAPTER XVIII

Rachel Norton regarded stonily the Mason oaks, the Mason columns, the Mason halls and rooms, the Mason furniture, and everything else that was Mason. She scowled positive defiance at the aristocratic features she saw delineated in the family portraits, save when she looked upon the bright, handsome face of Margaret's father. Then she softened, and said almost gently, to Margaret, "That must be your father's likeness." When Margaret answered in the affirmative, the old lady regarded it long and seriously, then added, "You are very like him. He must have been a very handsome man."

"I thought so," returned Margaret; "but I was a very young child when he died."

"Eleanor tells me that he was killed riding horseback."

"Yes; his horse ran with him, and then fell upon him."

"Are you afraid of horses?" queried the Puritan.

"Oh, no. I am very fond of them. Shall I show you ours?"

She was then carried with Eleanor to the stable lot, where the carriage horses and Oaks and Ruby and two colts were brought out for inspection. Then she was shown the cows and calves, and the milking not quite concluded. The poultry had been fed, and most of them were gone to roost, but she saw the flock of geese whitening

one corner of the back yard, and groups of ducks sat on the ground and quacked at her as she passed them. She observed that that was "a monstrous fine lot of ducks."

After tea they sat on the front veranda for an hour or more, Margaret Mason and the teacher talking of nothing in particular, and Mrs. Mason laboring to get question or answer out of her guest. Her success was meager. The New England woman seemed to be in a reverie.

William Huntley came about the time Mrs. Mason had despaired of doing anything with Miss Norton. He went first to his aunt, and kissed her forehead, and inquired after her health. Miss Norton stared when she saw the demonstration and heard the grave voice of this haughty aristocrat. When presented to her, he took her hand, and expressed, with quite as little emotion as even she could have desired, his pleasure at meeting Miss Field's friend and visitor. Miss Norton shook his hand in silence, but scrutinized his face as it appeared by the lamplight coming through the open windows. Then he spoke to the others, without any hand-shaking, however, and taking his seat by his aunt conversed with her for some minutes in an undertone, and thereby enabled the New England spinster to pursue her own line of thought. After a little while he went away without saying anything to the others, except to tell Margaret that he had that day finished the cleaning and rehanging of his paintings and engravings, and would be glad if she and "any of her friends" would come to his house the next day and pass judgment on the light and position in which those

works had been hung. Miss Norton was again surprised when she saw him kiss his aunt at parting, and Eleanor Field afterward averred that her visitor emitted not only a distinct but a very emphatic grunt thereupon. Margaret protested that she heard nothing of the kind; and Mrs. Mason declined, when called upon, to take any part in such a controversy, wherefore it seems safe to record that Miss Norton did so express herself.

The conversation finally proved so difficult that Mrs. Mason suggested the possible fatigue of Miss Norton after the warm day; and that lady promptly availed herself of the opportunity to retire to her chamber for the night.

Later, on the piazza, Margaret said, "Do you sing or do you play?"

Eleanor replied laughingly that she did a little of both.

"Well, well!" exclaimed Margaret. "I have never happened to think of your accomplishments."

Then she proposed an adjournment to the sitting-room and the piano. Here Eleanor found intense enjoyment in the music denied her ever since her coming to the South. Now, while Margaret sat at a window looking out into the night, the teacher touched the keys of the mellow, full-toned instrument, passing, as she had been bidden by her hostess, from one strain of music to another as her feelings and their associations suggested, now executing a passage from Beethoven or Chopin, now expressing a dream of Schumann, now striking out the melodies of the Italian opera,

now wandering into homely ballads, moving on and on in a sort of reverie, and always with the hand of a proficient and the expression of an enthusiast. Whenever she looked at the still, stately figure at the window, whose profile was so clearly outlined upon the background of the darkness without, some new thought of old romance came to her mind, and she passed into fresh regions of sentiment and harmony, till she poured forth not only a number of the compositions of others, but seemed to unburden her own sad heart of many and many a feeling long pent up there.

At length Margaret came to her, and putting her arms around her, said, "Now, dear, that you have given me so much pleasure, shall we not sing a little together? I think we shall harmonize in song as otherwise."

"I know it—I know it," returned Eleanor, earnestly.

Then they sang together—duets from Bellini and Donazetti, duets from Meyerbeer, duets extemporized from Rossini, plantation melodies, all through the range of stage and home music, the clear, pure soprano of the teacher chording perfectly with the round, deep contralto of her friend, and both of them thoroughly harmonizing with the rich, strong, true accompaniment of the instrument. When at length they paused, they saw the open windows and the door of the room crowded with dark faces, whose bright, eager eyes demonstrated with what eagerness a band of silent listeners had heard their songs. Eleanor started

at the strange spectacle, and involuntarily caught Margaret's hand.

"It is only the negroes come to hear us," said the latter. "They always come to the door and windows to hear me sing or play. Let us give them 'The Swanee River.'"

Then the two sang that simple air. At its close there was a murmur in the dusky audience as if in echo of the melody that had stirred their hearts. Then arose the voice of Jane.

"'Fore God!" cried she, "I think you niggers got your share o' music fer one night. Now you kin go!"

Margaret led Eleanor to the door, where she saw the hall almost filled with all sorts of negroes, black, brown and yellow, men, women and children, the neatly dressed servants of the house and the yard, the rough, ill-kept laborers of the field—all of them grinning and bowing.

"You thank my friend Miss Eleanor Field very much for this music, don't you?" said Margaret.

"Yes'm," responded an old man, nodding his head repeatedly, "and you too, Miss Marg'ret. Nobody can't sing better'n you kin."

"Well," returned Margaret, laughing, "we are obliged to you for listening so quietly and patiently."

Then there was a great chorus of thanks from the crowd, and a like chorus of "good nights," and all of them departed as silently as they had come.

"Do they often do this?" inquired Eleanor.

"Oh, yes," answered Margaret. "Negroes are passionately fond of music, and most of them have

good ears and good voices. Scipio is the only one of them on the plantation whom I have never heard sing or whistle, and I think it is only his sense of dignity which prevents him. In the warm weather, when doors and windows are open, they invariably gather around the house to hear any music. Indeed, I have known them to stand beneath those windows through a pretty heavy shower of rain, while listening to singing."

"Did you see them out there before you came to the piano? I saw you looking out a window while I played."

"I was observing them as they collected. You had not struck a dozen chords before two or three of them came from the back yard. It was in response to their whispered requests from the piazza that I joined you and had you sing. If you had failed to sing well—"

Eleanor joined in her friend's laugh, as she always did in bare nervous sympathy, but quickly said, "It doesn't seem to me so amusing, after all."

"Well," returned Margaret, "you would have been the worst vilified woman in the county. They can endure the bird that can't sing and won't sing, and they put up with the bird that can sing and won't sing, but they positively despise the bird that can't sing but will sing. I doubted if it was entirely fair, in the circumstances, to drag you into singing; but I felt sure, either that you could sing or that you would refuse to try. I would not tell you they were here, for I wished to surprise you, and I feared you might not do so well if you knew you had such a large audience."

"So you were conspiring with your Africans while I thought you were gazing at the stars or the dark forest, absorbed in romantic and melancholy musing."

"So much for your romantic imagination!" exclaimed Margaret.

"So much for your fine acting!" retorted Eleanor. "Why, do you know that the sight of your face and figure yonder, outlined so softly yet plainly on the black canvas of the night, imparted a softer and sweeter and more spiritual tone to all I played, and to my thoughts as well?"

"Then the conspiracy was a wonderfully worthy one, dear," cried Margaret, putting her arm around her friend's waist and drawing her face against her own; "for you positively charmed your audience, and me, too. But it is time to go."

On reaching the head of the stairs they saw the door of Miss Norton's room ajar, and light shining through it.

"That's an invitation to some one to visit your stern compatriot," observed Margaret. "Suppose you do it, and then come to my room and let me know if she wants anything."

Eleanor complied, and found the spinster sitting bolt upright in a straight-backed chair, and sternly regarding the ceiling above her. There were old fashioned rocking-chairs and modern self-rockers in the room, and cushioned arm-chairs too; but this woman chose the straightest, hardest seat to be found. But she spoke kindly enough to Eleanor, saying:

"Take a seat, child, if you care to stop a bit with me."

"Miss Mason wishes to know if anything is needed for your comfort," said Eleanor, seating herself near the old lady.

"I am much obliged to her," returned the latter. "I don't need anything; it is all very fine and comfortable here."

Then there was a pause, during which Miss Norton transferred her gaze to a lace curtain that swayed back and forth in the farthest window of the room. After a while she said: "It's all very fine and beautiful here. This is the finest house I ever saw."

"And yet it's very comfortable, and quiet, and homelike, too," suggested Eleanor.

"They must be rich people," remarked Miss Norton.

"I suppose so. They own four or five thousand acres of land, and make large crops, and have a great many horses, mules, cattle, sheep, hogs, and everything else that goes to make up a fine plantation."

"That old lady is a smart one!" exclaimed Rachel Norton, fixing her gray eyes on Eleanor.

"Oh!" ejaculated the latter, somewhat startled by the unexpected observation. "You mean Mrs. Mason, do you?"

Mrs. Mason was no doubt thirty years younger than Miss Norton, and looked perhaps a hundred and thirty years younger, hence Eleanor's want of preparation for the remark.

"Yes," returned Rachel Norton, snapping her lips together. "She's a smart one."

"She is quite an intelligent woman," said Eleanor, "and a very good one, too."

"And that young woman is no fool, I can tell you," resumed the elder lady.

"There is no brighter, or wiser, or handsomer, or better woman in the world than Margaret Mason," said Eleanor, slowly and clearly.

"Well, child," said the spinster, with a faint intimation of apology in her tone, "I didn't mean to say anything against her. She has been very kind to you, and both of them have been very polite to me."

Then followed a longer pause than before—broken at length by Miss Norton.

"And that young man," said she—"Mr. Huntley, I believe you call him—he's no fool either."

"I suppose not," said Eleanor, wearily.

"He's a masterful sort of a man," pursued Miss Norton; "and he's got a voice as clear as a bell; and he's tall and strong and active; and he's got an eye that is as quick and piercing as a hawk's; and he talks plain and positive language; and he's all over like his hand, smooth and sensitive, but as steady as steel, and as strong. He's a man that might do terrible things."

It was only the talk of an old woman who had always mastered everything about her, and was not liked for her jealousy of the influence of others; but in the lamplight that wavered in the summer night-breezes the white haired, fierce-eyed Puritan looked like a prophetess gradually evolving a tale of future woe. Eleanor sat silent and wondering.

"He's a man," resumed the old lady, after a brief pause, "that would take a woman's heart and

a woman's mind by force, and make her his slave forever. I pity the woman he sets his mind on."

"Miss Mason would hardly thank you for your pity," said Eleanor, with some sarcasm. "He and she are to be married, and I have no doubt she will be able to hold her own against him or any other man."

"Humph!" grunted the old lady. "Maybe so—maybe so."

Eleanor was tired of being on the defensive, so she said, "Do you suppose that Mr. Huntley is a Ku Klux?"

"No, I don't," responded Miss Norton, promptly. "He might kill a man, or five men, in open fight, if they got in his way; but he's too proud to be hunting up niggers in the dark, and beating or shooting them. He's a dangerous man, but still he's every bit a man. I wouldn't believe him a Ku Klux if all the niggers between here and Jericho swore it."

Eleanor had quite enough by this time. She bade her visitor good night, reported to Margaret that Miss Norton was comfortable, went to her room, went to bed, and dreamed all night of battles, murders, giants, sibyls, witches, African jungles, wild beasts, and a thousand other amazing things.

CHAPTER XIX

The next morning Margaret insisted on going to William Huntley's house, to see his paintings and engravings. Mrs. Mason seconded her, adding that it was but a quarter of a mile walk. Eleanor acquiesced readily, but Rachel Norton was decidedly hard against it—"Plymouth Rockish," as Margaret whispered to Eleanor; but eventually she gave in. So the four walked up the road soon after breakfast. When about half-way across the lawn they heard the shrill neigh of a horse, and directly saw a black mare a little off the drive, eyeing them with curiosity.

"That is Delta," said Margaret—"William's mare which you have often seen." Then she cried, "Come here, Delta, I have a lump of sugar for you."

The mare recognized the voice and the outstretched hand, and after a pause and another neigh came walking slowly to them.

"Now isn't that a beautiful animal?" cried Margaret to Miss Norton, as the horse came to them with the long, swinging stride of the thoroughbred, carrying her head high in the air, her delicate ears pricked forward, and her neck proudly arched. Miss Norton had to admit that the mare was uncommonly handsome.

She came confidently to them, whinnying a sort of welcome, took the sugar offered her by Margaret, and walked by Margaret's side, now and

then rubbing her nose on the young lady's shoulder.

They were surprised when some fifty yards from the house to see a slight male figure glide toward them through the trees, but they soon recognized Mr. Marcus Aurelius Vaughn. He ran to them, crying, "Dear Mrs. Mason!" "Dear Miss Margaret!" and "My dear Miss Field!" Then he shook hands twice with each of the three, and after that looked at Miss Norton with a deep and long-drawn sigh.

"This is Mr. Vaughn, Miss Norton," said Margaret. "And, Mr. Vaughn, this is Miss Norton, Miss Field's friend and neighbor in her Northern home—whom we are all glad to have with us."

"My *dear* Madam," cried Mr. Vaughn, snatching at Miss Norton's hand, "I am *delighted* to meet you. Miss Field's friend is always welcome here; and I am very sure we shall all enjoy your society."

Rachel Norton was taken somewhat aback for an instant, but rallied, and gave Mr. Vaughn's hand a formal touch with her own icy digits, and accorded to him a severe:

"How are you, sir?"

"Oh, well, very well, dear Miss Norton," replied Mr. Vaughn. "I trust this climate agrees with you."

"It's right pleasant—so far," returned Miss Norton, now master of all the ice and granite in her system.

They proceeded to the house, where they saw Huntley walking on the piazza, followed by his dog, both of them apparently unconscious of the

coming of visitors. The man, moving slowly, with eyes on the floor, excited Rachel Norton's curiosity.

"Who's that man?" asked she presently.

"That is Mr. Huntley," answered Eleanor.

"Aha!" said Miss Norton in a low voice.

"'Pears to be in a brown study."

"Probably he is," returned Eleanor. "He lives here alone, and is a student."

"Aha!" repeated Miss Norton.

When they reached the steps a black setter dog came out of the front door to meet them.

"Why, Nero," exclaimed Margaret, who was always the first to address animals, "how are you?"

The dog recognized her, and rubbed against her, wagging his great feathery tail and looking into her face with his large brown eyes, whining a welcome.

Now Huntley crossed the piazza to them rapidly, as if suddenly aroused, and made them welcome in a few words. Eleanor observed that he now, as always before, shook hands with no one, but placed his hands on his aunt's shoulders and kissed her brow. The old white and lemon colored dog who had been following him came with his master, and looked up at Margaret with his bleared, sad eyes.

"This," said Margaret to Miss Norton and Eleanor, "is old Bunk, as William has always most unpoetically called him. He is what we sporting people call a lemon-belten—lemon color and white, with small lemon spots scattered through the white. He is the father of Nero here, and of

our Guard, who are litter brothers. Bunk is now ten years old, and, though he does not hunt much, he is his master's most constant, and perhaps faithful, companion at home—eh, William?"

"He is with me more than any of them," replied Huntley, touching the dog's head with the tips of his fingers.

Eleanor made so bold as to inquire whom he meant by "them."

"Oh," he responded, with a half smile, "the darkies and dogs and horses."

Miss Norton was not pleased; but she gave no sign beyond a stare.

"Be seated," said Huntley. "Mark, see that the ladies get comfortable chairs while I prepare my picture gallery for their inspection."

"To be sure, dear boy," cried Mr. Vaughn, who proceeded to push, drag, and turn the half dozen oak rockers and upright arm-chairs into what he thought suitable places for the guests, for they were to remain on the veranda. Miss Norton eyed him severely, to the great amusement of Eleanor and Margaret, which amusement culminated in a laugh when the flaxen-haired gentleman exclaimed, "Dear, *dear* lady, have the *sweet* old rocker, so restful for the aged and weary!"

Miss Norton was dumbfounded. She took the chair with a gasp.

Directly a venerable, gray-haired colored woman appeared, bearing a large tray on which were a decanter of wine, a pitcher of lemonade, and several wine-glasses and goblets. Huntley followed, saying, "If you like mild wine take some of my making, which looks like sherry, and has

somewhat of its flavor, but which is not nearly so fiery. Or, if you prefer, there's lemonade."

Miss Norton tried the wine, as did Eleanor. "It's pretty good," observed the former, relaxing. Then pausing, she added, "I reckon there's no harm in it. It's mighty gentle."

Huntley, who overheard her, said, "I think you will have no cause to complain of its strength. I think I have made in that wine the safe beverage for the people of this climate. We ought never to venture on strong drink, as our Northern friends may do. I have tried for several years to get such a wine as the people of Italy and southern France enjoy, and this comes nearest it of all my efforts—the vintage of three years ago."

"Dear boy!" ejaculated Mr. Vaughn. "I—I—must taste that vintage." And he proceeded to pour himself a gobletful, which, after smiling at each one of the ladies, and bowing profoundly, he tossed off with celerity.

"Mr. Vaughn's experiment will demonstrate the innocuous nature of the beverage," remarked Huntley, dryly. "He will be as rational in half an hour as he is now."

Even Rachel Norton was forced to smile at the singularity of the evidence suggested.

A portly negro man, with white hair and round, smiling face, now stepped from the hall and, slightly inclining his head to Huntley, announced that the "room" was arranged. Huntley rose, and invited his guests to accompany him.

They entered a hall fifteen feet wide and almost that deep from ceiling to floor. Large arm-

chairs, mostly willow, were scattered along each wall, while matting, absolutely colorless, and showing some signs of age, covered the floor. There was no other furnishing except a thermometer at each end, a large barometer just inside the front door, and a tall clock that stood and ticked loudly near the back door. Margaret informed Eleanor that the plain, self-assertive time-piece was of great value to its owner, owing to its having been brought by an ancestor from England two hundred years ago. Huntley conducted them to the front room on the left of the hall, where they at once saw the walls hung with a variety of pictures. Some statuary stood in corners and near the fireplace.

"You need not occupy yourselves," said he, "with the statuary. It is inferior. That half-size Venus near the hearth is said to be the work of Canova. I doubt it, in spite of the price my father paid for it. The engravings are my best works. These cartoons of Raphael are well executed—especially the 'Paul preaching at Athens,' though rather the plainest of all. I rank next to them the engraving of the 'Immaculate Conception,' Murillo's painting now at the Louvre. I do not know where it was executed, as there is no mark upon it. My father purchased it in Paris just before his death in 1858. Next it you see an engraving from the painting in the Konigliches Schloss at Berlin, which represents Frederick William IV on his accession to the throne, viewing the multitude of his subjects, under which are his words, 'Dies ja ist mein.' He did not keep

it long; and what he kept he soon ceased to enjoy."

There was a hard, mechanical tone in Huntley's voice, which compelled silence.

"Beyond them," he resumed, after a brief pause, "you will see what I consider the finest specimens of photography I have ever seen. The copy of the Sistine Madonna is the best. That of the 'Notte' of Correggio is good; but it was impossible to portray without colors the marvelous light and shade of that great painting—as it is described to me, for I have never been in Europe. My father was there twice, and I was to be sent there to complete my education; but my youth at the time of his death, and the outbreak of the war in less than three years after, prevented me. The copies in oil from the masters are fairly good. My father brought them from Europe just before his death. He preferred the 'Aurora' of Guido, but my own preference is the 'Magdalen,' copied from a Correggio at Naples. Paul Potter's 'Bull' is an animated picture. I need not call attention to the rest. There are some water-color pictures of some little merit over there. On the third wall are the paintings I most esteem. That portrait of my grandfather is a fine piece, that of my grandmother nearly as good. That of my father is uncommonly good, both as a likeness and as a work of art, and the other members of the family are very well delineated. My sister, who died in childhood, is, I think, beautifully represented. But you may see, almost at a glance, that my mother's portrait is by far the loveliest of all."

All eyes followed his to a life-size full-length portrait of a woman, not outlined on the usual background, but standing on a balcony looking out upon a scene of hill and valley, and forest, and field of grain, and variously colored clouds that glowed in the splendor of a setting sun. It would have been dangerous to the effect to paint any ordinary face or form amid such surroundings; but the artist had exhibited his genius in thus surrounding the magnificent central figure. It was a tall woman, whom one could scarcely call slender or the contrary—an active, lithe figure, without an angle or an excess of any part—a woman with masses of deep brown hair, coiled high above a throat and shoulders fully displayed—a woman with low, broad forehead and dark, penciled brows, with large, luminous, blue-gray eyes, a Grecian nose, a rather short arched upper lip, a full, though not sensual under lip, a chin entirely feminine yet speaking much resolution, an oval face, a complexion of that rich yet clear olive tint which shows no blood on the surface but indicates its rich currents beneath. The painting was strikingly like the speaker, and as he stood gazing at it with his own brilliant and proud eyes, and with an unwonted flush on his cheeks, every one realized that he was the very son of a beautiful, intellectual and proud woman, paying the reverence he felt for nothing else in the wide world.

“This was painted as I recollect her,” said he, after some silence, “shortly before her death. I was away when she died. I was spared the misery of seeing her less beautiful than that.” He turned

and walked to a front window, and looked out upon the lawn.

The others proceeded to examine the various works of art, but Eleanor observed that Miss Norton gazed long and earnestly on the portrait of Mrs. Huntley, glancing quickly now and then at the figure that remained motionless for many minutes at the open window. To Eleanor, however, the sister's portrait was the most engaging of all. It was a child of not more than twelve years, slender and pale, with golden-tinted chestnut hair, which hung, somewhat curling, to the shoulders. She was dressed in white muslin, and wore no ornament except a necklace of small pearls around her delicate throat. Her eyes were a light brown, large and spiritual and gentle, yet her clear-cut features, and especially her arched mouth, indicated as aristocratic a lineage and feeling as the stately mother beside her exhibited. The resemblance of this face to the fair-haired father, General Huntley, was marked, though his was rather that of a well-bred, quiet, contented man.

"Poor fellow," said Margaret, looking at her cousin, "he looks more than ever solitary standing here among the effigies of his kindred, the last of his line."

Huntley stepped into the back piazza as she spoke and walked rapidly away, and he did not return until after his visitors concluded their inspection and went, at Mrs. Mason's invitation, into the hall. There he soon appeared, followed by two servants carrying trays on which were dishes and food. There were several small tables in the hall, which Huntley, assisted, with much

fluttering, by Mr. Vaughn, distributed among the ladies. Mr. Vaughn, endeavored to keep with both servants at the same time, with the result, common to such efforts, of doing no good and being in everybody's way. Once he tripped on the foot of the gigantic butler, Caesar, and went spinning half the length of the hall before he recovered his equilibrium. Miss Norton watched this performance with grim enjoyment.

Huntley offered to help no one. He took a chair near his aunt and spoke occasionally to her, but to no one else. He ate nothing, and Eleanor saw that he was preoccupied, but she could discover no impatience nor ill humor.

Miss Norton remarked to Mrs. Mason, who sat next her, that it was very early for apples—May apples being a part of the refreshment offered.

"Yes," said Huntley, "and this early fruit is poor and insipid. This is not the home of the apple. A higher altitude or a higher latitude is needed for it—perhaps both. I dislike to show a stranger such inferior products of our soil. Those fruits to which our climate are adapted are the best of their kind. Our peaches are the most deliciously flavored in the world, as far as I can learn. They are as superior to your peaches as your apples are to ours. Our watermelons are much the best of their kind. Our pears are not as sure nor as plentiful as those of the North; but they have a richer flavor."

"I didn't know you raised pears here," said Miss Norton. "I haven't seen a single tree."

"Dear me!" cried Mr. Vaughn, skipping toward her. "You could have seen two beauti-

ful ones right at the entrance to the cemetery. You went there, of course, yesterday, to the memorial exercises."

"No, I didn't," retorted Miss Norton, shortly.

"Dear me!" sighed Mr. Vaughn, folding his hands and regarding her with an appearance of commiseration.

"Mark," interposed Huntley, smiling slightly, "I think Miss Field might like an apple."

"Ah, dear young lady!" cried Mr. Vaughn, sliding across the hall to the table where the dish of apples sat. "Pardon my negligence. Have one of these. They are far better than the dear boy claims. Let me select a nice, smooth, round—er—golden fruit for you. This—no, this—no, this. Now try it and see if—if—Vaughn's judgment is not correct."

"Do you remember," said Huntley to Miss Norton, "what Grandfather Smallweed, in 'Bleak House,' often calls his wife?"

"No," answered she sourly, "I don't know Grandfather Smallweed, and I don't know anything about his bleak house, or his comfortable house, or anything he's got."

Eleanor was horrified, and expected Huntley to retort sternly. But he smiled and went on, "Well, Grandfather Smallweed calls his wife a 'brimstone chatterer'!"

"That's a mighty good name for some young men," remarked the Puritan with satisfaction, looking fixedly at Mr. Vaughn.

Huntley laughed, the first laugh Eleanor had heard from him, in which every one joined, except Miss Norton and Mr. Vaughn, and the latter sim-

pered in a confused way, as if suspecting, yet uncertain, that he was alluded to.

Presently Margaret said, "William, let me show Eleanor your study."

"Very well," assented Huntley, without moving.

The study was a large one, perhaps twenty by twenty-two feet in extent. Two of the walls were hung with maps, Maury's charts of oceanic currents, meteorological charts, and charts of history and chronology. There was a single picture—a life-size representation on porcelain of a woman, which Eleanor recognized as a copy of the portrait of Mrs. Huntley. There were eight or ten pedestals, on which rested as many busts—all in marble. Two large globes—celestial and terrestrial—stood near the long table in the center of the room. The shelves, occupying two walls and reaching almost to the ceiling, were filled with books—probably three or four thousand in number. There was a large, closed desk in one corner, near a window. The well-equipped writing-table showed a number of volumes in arm's reach of the one chair placed before it. Everything was as plain as the colorless matting on the floor, and indicated a place for laborious study.

When the two returned to the hall, and saw that Huntley was not there, Margaret asked for him, and was told by her mother that Pompey, the miller, had called him into the yard. For a few minutes they heard no voices outside; then some one said, "But, Mars William, I never can satisfy them Joneses and Waterses."

"Pompey's especial abomination," explained

Margaret—"two indigent, idle white families in the neighborhood, who are said to bring short measures of inferior corn to William's mill, to be ground, yet never get meal enough, or white enough, to please them."

They could not hear Huntley's answer. Soon they heard a voice, apparently twenty or thirty yards away, saying, "I jis' brung the bag o' corn what I fotch, an' Pomp won't give no meal for—to let you see how outrageous he's a-doin'."

"I am not deaf," returned Huntley, angrily. "You need not bawl in that fashion!"

But the man continued in the same tone, "I hope you'll settle this matter with this here nigger. He's forever a-jowerin' 'bout my corn, an' meal, an' everything."

After a minute or two the voice of the miller said, "Now, jis' look at it, Mars William, and say if I ain't right."

"You go to h—ll!" cried the stranger.

Huntley now spoke distinctly. "Confound you, Jim Waters!" said he. "I told you there were ladies in the house, but nothing can stop your big mouth. The corn is hardly fit for hog feed. Pompey is exactly right. He may give you half a bushel of good meal for this stuff, and feed it to the hogs; but I instruct him to refuse to receive any more of the kind, on any terms."

"He don't know good corn when he sees it," cried the white man.

"He knows more about corn than you and I do, or ever will. He is only doing his duty. I am tired of your complaints. From this time for-

ward I won't hear them. If his manner of dealing doesn't satisfy you, go elsewhere. Now I have said all I intend to say."

Presently there was silence outside; and then Huntley entered the house, frowning somewhat, but without any appearance of excitement.

"So," cried Margaret, laughing, "you are still bothered with 'them Joneses and Waterses.'"

"Yes," returned Huntley. "I have often thought that I ought to order all of those two families to stay away from the mill. Pompey is a very capable and conscientious miller; and I sometimes suspect that it is not fair to allow him to be annoyed by those people. But they are poor and shiftless, and they would have difficulty in getting meal if I turned them away."

Rachel Norton was interested. "Is Pompey a black man?" asked she.

"Yes—about the color of Caesar, whom you saw just now, who is his first cousin, and within a month of the same age. They belonged to my father, and afterward to me. They were of about the same age as my father."

"Have they stayed with you all the time?" asked Miss Norton.

"Yes; they have always lived here."

"Pretty well satisfied, then, I guess," said the lady. "Must have liked you and your father."

"I suppose they like me," said Huntley; "I know they were very fond of my father."

The party from Oak Hall soon took leave, Mr. Vaughn accompanying them to the gate. Rachel Norton had somewhat relaxed and showed signs of positive thawing; but Marcus Aurelius Vaughn

got his tall silk hat knocked off by the limb of a tree, and in his excited efforts to catch it as it rolled past that lady, lost his footing and fell against one of her venerable ankles. He recovered himself quickly, and offered a multitude of plaintive apologies; but she only glowered and hurried on, and Mr. Vaughn retreated to the house.

CHAPTER XX

On Monday morning, Eleanor, by invitation of Mrs. Anderson, went to breakfast with her and Miss Norton. The meal was at seven o'clock sharp, and later, and while Miss Norton was "doing up things in her room," Eleanor sat at a window in the parlor on the second floor, looking into the street.

After a little while she heard that confused murmur which indicates that a number of persons are witnessing or hearing something of exciting interest. Presently there appeared on the sidewalks a number of negroes and some white men and boys, and in the street several men on horseback. Just across the street all the mounted men alighted, and the horses were led away. Among those horses she recognized Delta and the gaunt sorrel which she had seen Mr. Vaughn ride. Six Federal soldiers were of the party, and some other men, not at first distinguishable in the crowd that pressed around them. But in a few seconds she saw the tall figure of William Huntley, wearing his usual broad-brimmed felt hat, and next him she saw the high-crowned silk hat of Mr. Vaughn and his long flaxen locks. The matter was clear to her now. Huntley and Vaughn had been arrested. She was horror-stricken. Nothing like that had ever come so near her before.

Soon after the horsemen stepped together from the street to the sidewalk she was able to see the

faces of both Huntley and Vaughn. The latter wore his usual look of placid ease; the former was paler than usual, but she saw, even at that distance, a fierce scintillation in his eyes.

The two prisoners walked forward among the soldiers; but there was no appearance of speaking on the part of any of them.

Very soon five or six negroes—large and athletic—pressed into the group composed of captors and captives, and uttered loud, angry words. She saw Huntley turn and face them, as did a stalwart soldier. Vaughn walked on with the rest of the guard. Then she saw two negroes rush toward Huntley and the soldier beside him. Then she saw Huntley strike the foremost to the ground; and then the soldier laid the other negro beside his companion. Then a halloo was raised by the mob of negroes, and there was a general melee, the rest of the guard joining in the fray. Then darkness seemed to her to come over the scene, and all sounds mingled in a meaningless murmur. She did not faint, but the horror of the scene temporarily stupefied her senses. When she looked out again the crowd had disappeared, and the village street resumed its accustomed quiet.

In a few minutes, she saw Margaret Mason's carriage driven rapidly to the front of the hotel, and Margaret herself at once entered the hotel. Eleanor ran down-stairs to meet her, and found her on the veranda talking with Mr. Anderson. Margaret was rather pale, but her voice was as steady and her bearing as composed as usual. She came to Eleanor at once, and kissed her, saying:

"I did not know you were here, dear."

"I had the unhappiness," cried Eleanor, nervously, "to see—to see on the street there—"

"Oh, yes," interrupted Margaret, quietly, "to see the trouble with the negroes. Well, no one was much hurt, they tell me, except the two negroes struck by William and the sergeant, both of whose heads fell on rough stones and received some scalp wounds. Mr. Vaughn—" and here Margaret could not repress a smile, "Mr. Vaughn had his silk hat terribly beaten, and trampled upon; and they say his curls were very much deranged; but he suffered little otherwise."

"Poor fellow!" sighed Eleanor, though the picture presented to her mind of Marcus Aurelius in a battered hat and with disordered flaxen curls was amusing enough. "I suppose," she added, "that these arrests must have been made under the Ku Klux regulations."

"Yes; William has several times been notified by friends who were intimate with the authorities that they would arrest him if he remained here. But his answer invariably was that he would not leave the country nor hide in it, but stand the issue. By the way, here comes Mr. Vaughn's pet negro boy."

Then she called to a diminutive negro child bestriding a great, lean horse, and weeping as he was jostled up and down by the long, rough walk of the animal, "Why, Toodles, what is the matter with you?"

The boy reined up, and, on locating the speaker, blubbered, "Why, Miss Marg'ret, they bin an' tuk Mars Marcus!"

"I suppose they will not hurt him, Toodles,"

said Margaret, soothingly. "Mr. Huntley is with him; and they'll get along pretty well together."

"Yes'm," whimpered Toodles; "but his ma an' his pa is mighty skeered. An' I dunno what I'm to do without Mars Marcus," and he sobbed afresh.

"Wait a moment, Toodles," said Margaret.

Toodles said, "Yes'm," and sat on his horse, rubbing his eyes with his little brown fists while Margaret went into the hotel office. In a minute or two she returned, bringing an envelope, which she carried out and handed to the boy, saying, "Now ride home, and give that either to Mr. or Mrs. Vaughn. Take care of it. It is a note telling them all about it."

"Yes'm," returned the boy, putting the note in the pocket of his breeches. "Thankee, mum; they'll be powerful glad to git it, I reckon." And then he turned his horse, and went back, bouncing at ever leap of the awkward horse.

Now a tall, straight, slender, very black, neatly dressed man standing on the sidewalk lifted his hat to Margaret.

"Ah, Josh!" cried she. "I thought you would be here!"

"Yes, Miss Margaret," returned he, standing uncovered. "You *knew* I'd follow Mars William as fast as I could."

"How is it now, Josh?"

"Well, they put Mars William an' Mr. Vaughn in jail. Neither of 'em was hurt. Mr. Vaughn was somewhat *disarranged*, an' Mars William cut one of his knuckles on that nigger's head; but it don't amount to anything. That sergeant talked

a heap about the lick Mars William hit. He says it's the best he ever saw. I told him Mars William was about the hardest hitter I ever saw."

"Were you there when the fighting occurred?"

"No, ma'am; I wish I had been!" cried Josh, regretfully.

"It is very well that you were not. You could have done no good."

"I could 'a' beat one or two of them niggers till they got sick of it!" exclaimed the man.

"That would not have helped."

"You see, Miss Marg'ret," pursued Josh, "Mars William had sent me at sun-up to the mill with some things for Uncle Pompey. When I come back the Yankees had got him an' gone. I got a horse an' rode as fast as I could; but I didn't catch up with 'em till they was goin' into the jail. But they let me talk to him there, and he wrote this note to you. An' he give me word what was to be done at home—though there ain't no trouble about that, as Uncle Caesar an' Uncle Pompey an' me can 'tend to everything."

"Josh," said Margaret, after glancing at the note, "who do you suppose could have had Mr. William arrested? I never heard that he was charged with Ku Kluxing."

"No more he ain't," returned Josh, decisively. "I b'lieve that Tom Brown was the instigation of it right now. That's the nigger what Mars William run off the plantation last Saturday. Tom was plowin' under Uncle Joe—the foreman, you know—out in the Johnson field. 'Bout 'leven o'clock in the day—you know they knocks off fer the day, on Saturday, at twelve o'clock—Tom

says he goin' to stop. Uncle Joe says it's a hour till knockin'-off time. Tom then runs his plow right across five or six rows of cotton, draps his line, leaves his mule standin' by hisself, an' walks off into the shade an' lays down. Uncle Joe sends for Mars William. He come pretty soon, an' hears the noration, an' drives Tom off the place. He ought to 'a' beat him; but he didn't. Tom come to town that evenin', an' we ain't seen him sence. But yisterday Uncle Joe got word that Tom said he'd have him an' Mars William in jail before long."

"But that could not have caused the arrest," said Margaret.

"Not by itself. But here's more. You know Bill Boston stole Jasper Mason's wife on your plantation about the beginnin' of the year. An' you know when Bill an' Jasper got to quawlin' over it your ma sont for Mars William. He went over to the settlement where they lives—I reckon it's three miles from your house—an' made Bill turn the woman loose to her husband, but Bill stole her agin. An' two nights after that somebody called Bill out of his house an' shot him dead."

"But," asked Margaret, with some impatience, "what has that to do with Mr. William's arrest?"

"I'm comin' to that," answered Josh, coolly. "Everybody knows that Jasper shot Bill—an' sarved him right. But Jasper ain't a feller to be fooled with, an' Bill's kin knows that Jasper's kin ain't to be fooled with. An' besides, they know Bill was wrong. So they lets Jasper alone, an' says Mars William done it. That's the way some

folks has of 'scusin' theyselves for not makin' a fight."

"But I don't see any sense in all this," said Margaret.

"Well, Miss Marg'ret, I'm a nigger what's got mighty little sense; but you jis' listen. You know Mr. Taylor, what lives on t'other side of the road from the fur end of your plantation—that white man that used to live pretty near us?"

"Yes," replied Margaret, becoming interested.

"Very well. You knows him to be as mean as even poor white folks ever gits to be. Very well. You knows how Mars William give him a cow-hidin' 'bout me endurin' of the war."

"I have heard of it," returned Margaret.

"Well, I'll tell you an' this lady, if you'll hear me."

"I'd rather not, Josh," said Margaret.

"But it's got its bearin's jist now, Miss Marg'ret; an' you'd better let me tell it."

As Margaret was silent, Josh proceeded: "I was sparkin' a gal what b'longed to Mr. Vance—which Mr. Taylor was his overseer—Em'ly, what's my wife now. Mars William knowed it. He told Mr. Taylor, when he went to the army at fust, that I could go to see my gal, if Mr. Taylor didn't object, an' almost the last thing he did was to give me a pass to last fer a year. Mr. Taylor said it was all right. Before that pass was out Mars William sont another one, an' Mr. Enlow, our overseer, made all the boys laugh when he give it to me an' gives his own pass too, an' says, 'Josh, you've got one more year to git that gal.' So it went all right, till one night I went to see

Em'ly an' I met Mr. Taylor in the yard. Says he, 'Who's that?' 'Josh Huntley,' says I. 'What you doin' here?' says he, mad-like. 'Come to see Em'ly, as ujal,' says I. 'You git out,' says he. I 'lowed as I was only a comin' 'cordin' to 'greement 'twixt him an' Mars William. He says he don't keer a cuss fer 'greements, an' 'fore I knowed what he was 'bout, he knocked me down with a big stick an' beat me till I could hardly see. The black folks had to come out an' take me away; an' his own wife had to run out an' git between him an' me. Mars William came home in two or three months, on furlough—that was in January before the surrender. He looked at me almost as soon as he come. He examined this scar on my head, an' the scars on my neck an' arms, but he never said a word. Next day, soon after breakfast, he says to me, 'Josh,' says he, 'saddle Gamma fer me, an' ole Jake fer yourself.' Ole Jake was that sorrel horse what died two or three years ago. 'Whar you goin', Mars William?' says I. 'That's none of your business,' says he. Well, he come back d'rectly with a cowhide in his hand, feelin' it in his hands as if to see if it was strong an' supple. I 'spicioned somethin', so I says, 'You ain't goin' to ride with a cowhide, is you? I never see you use anythin' but spurs.' An' he wore his spurs then. All he says was, 'You'd better hold your tongue.' That was 'nough fer me. Well, we got on our horses an' rode up the road—he never sayin' a word. Bimeby we come tolluble near Mr. Taylor's house on Mr. Vance's place, an' meets Mr. Taylor walkin' in the road. Mars William got down off'n his

horse, an' give me the bridle—jist as cool as a cucumber. Then he goes up to Mr. Taylor. Says he, 'Taylor, I've come fer a settlement of that affair between you an' Josh.' Mr. Taylor was a big, strong man, at least forty pound heavier than Mars William. So he answers mighty rough, cussin' 'bout men foolin' in niggers' matters. Then Mars William—calm as you ever see—axes him 'bout the whole contrivance. Mr. Taylor up and tells it 'bout as it was. Mars William 'minds him of the 'greement 'bout my goin' there, an' Mr. Taylor never denies it, but talks big 'bout whippin' any nigger on his place, an' whippin' any white man what takes up fer a nigger."

Josh paused and Eleanor said, without knowing it, "What then?"

"Then Mars William caught hold of him, an' turned loose with his cowhide. Mr. Taylor was big an' tough an' strong, an' Mars William was slim and young; but I never seed a thing fly like that cowhide. He whaled that man till he mighty nigh lifted him off the ground. Mr. Taylor hit him once with his fist, an' knocked him back nearly to the horses. I jumped down then to help Mars William; fer I was 'termined to kill that man if Mars William was hurt. 'Damn you!' hollers Mars William, 'go back to your horses.' An' then he run on Zeke Taylor an' knocked him down, an' kicked him half across the road. I prayed to the Lord that he would kill him. But he wouldn't do it. He told Zeke Taylor to git up. But when he got up, he whaled him worse than ever. Finally, when Mr. Taylor was cut all to

pieces, an' could hardly stand, Mars William says—cool as could be, though he was 'bout out o' breath—'Now you've learned the cost of beatin' one of my negroes!' Mr. Taylor says he'll go to the house an' git his gun an' kill Mars William. 'All right,' says Mars William, sorter good-natured like, 'I'll wait here fer you. I've got my repeater. If you get the advantage, you are welcome to do your worst; if I get it, I'll kill you.' Mr. Taylor went to his house, a cussin' an' be-meanin'. We stayed there fer half a hour or more; but Mr. Taylor never come. Mr. Taylor quit Mr. Vance's place jist attar the war, an' bought that farm at the fur end of your plantation. An' he don't travel the same road as Mars William any more."

"What of all that?" inquired Margaret.

"Mr. Zeke Taylor spread it that Mars William killed Bill Bostin; an' he's been seen talkin' several times with the soldiers sence they've been here. An' he was in the crowd with the niggers that run agin' Mars William this mornin'. That's what there is of it."

Josh's argument was very plausible, it seemed to both Margaret and Eleanor. The servant had studied his master's case.

As the hour for the opening of school had almost arrived, Eleanor went away to her duties. She ascertained, however, before leaving the hotel, that the train to the county-seat left at four o'clock in the afternoon, and returned at seven in the forenoon. The children were as quiet and sad as their teacher. Not one of them had to be "kept in." At two o'clock the school was dis-

missed. Eleanor's dinner was finished by three o'clock. Then she packed a valise, informed Mr. and Mrs. Williams that she purposed to go to the county-seat, and made her way to the station, the serving-woman, in consideration of a dime, cheerfully carrying her small luggage to the hack-stable. Miss Norton was told nothing. Eleanor saw Huntley and Vaughn board the train, under the guard of three soldiers, just as she reached the station. She was closely veiled, and took a seat at the rear of the one passenger car, and was not recognized by either of the prisoners.

At half-past four she was at the county-seat. Ten minutes later she met her friend Agnes Meacham at the hotel.

"What in the world has brought you here, you dear, mean thing?" exclaimed the latter.

"Where is the Captain?" asked Eleanor.

"Oh!" cried Mrs. Meacham. "You have come to see him, not me, have you."

"Dear Agnes," returned Eleanor, "bring him in if he is in the house. I will speak to both of you at once, if I can."

Agnes Meacham was a woman of sense, and the Captain was brought promptly.

"Now," said Eleanor, after a brief exchange of salutations, "I will tell you my mission, as there is no time to be lost."

The husband and wife looked at each other, as there was a suspicion that the teacher had lost her mind. Then the Captain invited her to speak.

"I have come," said Eleanor, "to procure the release of two men who were brought here, on the same train with me, who have been arrested

under the regulations relating to Ku Klux outrages. These two men come from near Cherenden. I know them, and their friends, and relations. Let me tell you about them."

"It is hardly worth while, Miss Eleanor," said the Captain. "I am under orders. What can I do?"

"Hear me patiently," cried she.

"You shall be heard," returned the Commandant.

She proceeded to describe Huntley and Vaughn as she thought them to be, describing also the kindness she had received at Margaret Mason's hands, and from her mother, and how the daughter had entertained Miss Norton, her friend. She mentioned, further, the action of Huntley in sustaining her as teacher of the Cherenden school.

Mrs. Meacham's sympathy was quickly enlisted, as she showed by joining Eleanor in her appeal for the release of the two prisoners. The Captain, however, gave no sign.

Eleanor then dwelt upon the kindness of Huntley to his servants and laborers and the affection they exhibited for him; and she repeated the substance of Josh's account of the chastisement Huntley administered to Taylor years ago. She also told Miss Norton's judgment of Huntley.

The Captain smiled at her enthusiasm, and said, "I suspect that you have a personal interest in this handsome rebel."

His wife exclaimed vehemently and indignantly against the insinuation. Eleanor replied calmly, that he was to marry her beautiful and noble friend, Margaret Mason,

"I beg your pardon," said the Captain, with an expression of contrition. "But I meant no harm."

"Certainly not," returned Eleanor. "But what are you going to do for us?"

"I will send for the sergeant who was in charge," said he, "and see what is to be learned. And then I will visit the jail, and see the prisoners. The little man with the high hat and flaxen curls is probably the victim of some low malice; but I doubt about your stalwart philosopher."

"Well, I hope you will get about it at once," said Mrs. Meacham, with some impatience.

The Captain laughed, and proceeded to call to a soldier below stairs, and give him some order.

The three conversed on various subjects until there came a rap at the door of their private sitting-room. On an invitation to enter the door was opened, and a tall, powerfully built soldier, with the sergeant's chevrons on his sleeves, entered and saluted.

"Sergeant McGahan," said the Captain, "you arrested and brought to town to-day two citizens—Mr. Huntley and Mr. Vaughn."

"Yes, Cap'n," replied the Sergeant.

"Now tell us, as well as you recollect (for I have not the lists here), on what charges they were arrested."

"I hear-r-d," answered the Sergeant, "that it was on accounts of a killin' of a negro named Bill Bostin."

"And do you know who informed against those two men?"

"Cap'n, it was tould me that Bostin's wife—or

conkibine, or phatever she is—infor-r-med, an' also a white man of the name of Taylor. 'Though I doesn't know about Taylor; but I seen him at the guard-house several times, a talkin' agin Misther Huntley—the Kur-r-nel, as I calls him."

"Aha!" cried Mrs. Meacham, eagerly.

The Captain motioned her to be silent, and said, "And what was said about Mr. Vaughn?"

"Och! The little crathur wid de tall hat an' de cur-r-ls? I think he was 'rested on accounts of his bein' the Kur-r-nel's friend."

"How did they behave? I hear there was a fight on the street as you brought them through the village."

"Faith, there was," answered the Sergeant, cheerfully; "an' it was a foine affair!"

"I do not see anything fine in a fray of that sort," said the Captain, sternly.

"Well, Cap'n," said Sergeant McGahan, saluting, "it ain't often that a foight is good while soldiers is on juty; but this was altogether out o' the common run. You see the privates was a little in front escortin' the man wid the hat an' cur-r-ls, an' me an' the Kur-r-nel was a-walkin' behin', talkin' as gintlemen ujually talks. An' the Kur-r-nel's a mighty smart man, I can tell ye, wid a figur as I never seen the beat of. So while we was a-talkin', up comes a crowd of nagurs—an' one white man—an' begins to bemane de Kur-r-nel. So I says, 'You stop that. The Kur-r-nel's in my charge, an' I'll be—' beg your pardon, Cap'n, an' fair ladies, but I got into habits of swearin' in airy life, an' I can't hardly quit

'em now; but I says nobody can insult him. But they goes on; till fin'ly the Kur-r-nel says—"

"He's no colonel, Sergeant," interrupted the officer.

"Well," resumed the Sergeant, "he ought to be. An' if he was at the head of an Oirish rigiment he'd make the foinest fight as ever was seen in this worruld. Hows'ever, the Kur-r-nel says, after a bit, 'Sergeant, I'll have to knock down a nagur or two. What do you say?' 'Well,' says I, 'no soldier an' Oirishman is goin' to see his friend impojed upon. So you can count on me to shtand by you, whenever it comes to a case of needcessity.' Then they just rushes on the Kur-r-nel. Cap'n, it would 'a' done your heart good to see the Kur-r-nel. A bug nagur—forty or fifty poun' heavier as the Kur-r-nel, an' taller, come at him. The Kur-r-nel let fly; an' I never see a nater lick since I was bor-r-n. That nagur fell as good as dead—eyes smashed, nose smashed, mouth smashed. It was trully a divar-sion to see him go doon."

"And what happened then?" asked the Captain, impatiently.

"Well," resumed the Sergeant, "thin up coomes another nagur as big as the fir-rst. Now the Kur-r-nel was wantin' to doon him too. But I sees that the Kur-r-nel's hand was a-bladin' frum the lick he gives the far-r-st man. So I pushes him aside. You see I was to protect the prisoners of the Gover-r-mint. So I lets fly onto this one. An' doon he comes, right on top of the Kur-r-nel's man. But I must say that I belave that the Kur-r-nel hit better as me."

"Why, Sergeant," cried the Captain, "it looks as if you had a very discreditable row!"

"Ah, Cap'n," said Sergeant McGahan, enthusiastically, "it was one of the foinest rows you ever seen! Up comes the man Taylor. The Kur-r-nel jist slaps him on the jaw, an' thin he goes on the groun'. An' by that time the gar-rd sees what's goin' on. An' him wid the tall hat an' yaller curl, he sees it; an' he r-runs. An' he slaps a nagur. An' another nagur knocks his hat off, an' all on us tramples on the hat. An' the men hits right an' lift. An' Private Joe Swaney, he lifts a nagur 'most off the airth wid a punch under the jaw. An' Private Roach, he hits a nagur on the ear an' sends him wabblin' across the strait. An' the Kur-r-nel knocks down one or two more, fer all his han' was a bladn'. An'—an' I gits in a lick or two more meself."

"Sergeant! Sergeant!" cried the Captain. "This is outrageous. What were you thinking of?"

"Sor-r!" returned the loud-voiced man, "Oi was thinkin' of the land o' the free an' the home o' the brave. An' Oi was a thinkin' of the flag!"

"What about the flag?"

"The flag is always where the sodgers of the United States is on juty!"

Mrs. Meacham and Eleanor could not refrain from applauding the Irishman. The Captain assumed a cold air, and said:

"You brought your prisoners here?"

"Yis, indade. They comes wid us."

"Are they in jail?"

"Yis, sor-r. An' I hope they'll be comfor-rt-

able. I give the Kur-r-nel some of my blankets; an' Joe Swaney give the little man wid the high hat some of his; an' we got 'em somethin' to dhrink (though they don't dhrink as I thought they ought to); an' we got 'em some seegars an' ice, an' didn't allow the Kur-r-nel to pay for 'em; an' we've had a good square mail of vittels sint 'em; an' now they is a-smokin an' a talkin'; an' the men is mighty glad to have the s'ciety of raal gintlemen. An' nothin' is goin' to happen."

"It looks as if this Colonel, as you call him, had magnetized you," said the Captain.

"I don't know, sor-r," replied the Sergeant, "about magnetizin'; but I knows he's a foine gintleman, an' I knows his own nagur Josh come to the gar-r-d-house to see him an' went away a-cryin'."

Captain Meacham sat silent a little while, then he said he would look into the matter, and then he and the Sergeant went away together.

Just before sunset he returned, but instead of discussing the object of Eleanor Field's visit, proposed to take her and his wife driving. Mrs. Meacham consented at once; but Eleanor declined, saying that she did not care to be known as being in the town, and that she would hardly enjoy a ride. On her insisting that the others should take their airing, they went, and did not return until dusk. Then she renewed her application to the Commandant with increased earnestness.

He seemed to be perplexed. At last she said, "Tell me plainly, Captain, if it is out of your power to help me."

"I don't see how I can do it," returned he, rather impatiently.

"Well, Arthur," interposed his wife, "I think you might speak in a courteous tone, whether you can help us or not."

"I beg pardon," said he. "I did not mean to be anything but thoroughly polite and considerate to Miss Field; but I am worried to think that I cannot do as she wishes. By the way, it seems that you also would be helped by my granting her request."

"I certainly should," replied she, promptly, "and I should have thought that you saw that from the beginning."

"Is it the tall, dark athlete, or the delicate gentleman with golden locks that is to be cared for?" asked her husband, jestingly.

"That's like a man!" exclaimed Agnes Meacham, indignantly. "A woman is never credited with any better motive than personal interest or sentimentality. These two are Eleanor's friends, and in some sense her benefactors; and you will not deny that they have been shown to be gentlemen far above any crime."

"Oh!" retorted he. "Very intellectual and good-mannered men have often committed crimes."

"Then," cried his wife, with that trying directness which characterizes women's arguments, "tell us if you think that either of these is such a man."

"Now," said the Captain, "let me act Scotchman with you, and answer with a question. How much are you indebted to Southern chivalry and that kind of thing? How many of the excellent

rebels have done you a kindness or given you even recognition?"

"Those are not proper questions," answered Mrs. Meacham. "It does not matter whether they have helped me or recognized me, or even whether they have treated me decently. These two, you cannot deny, are not of the material criminals are made of. Can you? They have claims on me—and should have on my husband—through my own dear friend Eleanor Field. They are persecuted by stupid negroes, led no doubt by that brute Taylor. Every account points directly that way. But while we are talking of treatment by the men of this section, I do not hesitate to say, not only that I have never received an unkind word or look from a man in the South, but that I have never traveled, or gone shopping, or been in any place, without seeing every man give way to me and forbear to do or accept anything until I was served. You never heard a coarse word or a loud one, when these men have been aware of my presence. You know that boisterous altercations have ceased at once whenever I approached a crowd engaged in such. You know that when I walk in the hotel or on the streets they give place to me. You know that when I go into a store every man stands aside, and waits for me to be attended to; that when I go to the railway ticket office they retire in my favor; and that they often doff their hats to me on the street in the most respectful manner."

"Deny it, Captain, if you can!" cried Eleanor, entering into her friend's enthusiasm.

"I can't deny it," said he, laughing good-humoredly.

"Well, then," said his wife, "tell us foolish women what is in the way of your doing a handsome thing now."

"Can't you understand that I have not the authority?" cried the officer, rising and striding over the floor.

"Why haven't you the authority?" demanded his wife.

"Because I do not make the laws."

"Yes; but you have some discretion in enforcing them."

"But I must enforce them discreetly."

"Lack-a-day!" exclaimed Agnes Meacham, sarcastically. "Discreet discretion! I thought a military man eschewed metaphysics and avoided foolish tautology. But this is the age of philosophers!"

"Well, now, Mrs. Meacham," said her husband, "let me ask you a question or two. Who has shown you any attention in the South? Who has called on you? Who has made you welcome to the church where you have worshiped? On the other hand, what newspaper has failed to proclaim the Government a cruel tyranny, and its officers a heartless constabulary? What public speaker has omitted an opportunity to revile the people of the North? What have you and I experienced here except the most studied ostracism?"

"Put yourself in their place," cried his wife. "What would you have done if the relations of the two sections had been reversed?"

"I should have been quite as uncompromising as they are," replied he frankly. "But the two cases would have been entirely different. We are the lawful government, attempting to enforce the principles of the Constitution which binds them and us, and they persist, even after four years of murderous warfare, in resisting the lawful authorities who endeavor to carry out the laws."

"Who is to judge?" retorted Mrs. Meacham. "Did they not think they were right in seceding from the Union? Do they not think they are right in resisting the encroachments on the liberties they claim to be entitled to?"

"You are very magnanimous!" said he.

"Pardon me, Captain," said Eleanor. "I have suffered quite as much from sectional prejudice as you have, and I have no doubt that I have suffered more from ostracism; but as bitter as those things are, I cannot forget that I have found substantial friends here."

"Two or three—perhaps half a dozen," suggested the officer.

"But ought not those few to be all the more considered on account of the smallness of their number?" said Eleanor.

"The law is in general terms always," rejoined the Captain. "Some innocent persons suffer from any general rule."

"Yes," said Eleanor; "but not when they do not come within the description of the persons to be punished."

"You women are making out a strong case," admitted the Captain. "Now please inform me how I can do anything."

"You can turn these two men loose," answered his wife positively.

"That's cool," said he. "But this is a Gordian knot that cannot be cut in that fashion."

Eleanor went to an open window, and stood looking out at the people who walked the street. She was sick at heart. Perhaps there was selfishness in her wish to deserve and preserve the friendship of the few who had been kind to her; but she felt that there was also an imperative duty to discharge. After a few minutes she returned to Captain Meacham and his wife. She did not know it, but there were tears in her eyes.

"Captain Meacham," she cried, desperately, "tell me if you will not help me, and let me go home. If I cannot do this thing, I will not, I cannot, I dare not ever look Margaret Mason in the face again. Hear my last appeal, selfish as it is, and unfair as it may seem. If you refuse me, I shall return, at the end of this week, to my impoverished and unhappy family, to share their scant living and their troubles. If you will not interpose in behalf of my friends, will you not do *me* this kindness?"

"I have to obey orders," said the soldier.

Just then there arose the shrill sound of a bell, tingled and jingled in the hand of the hotel boy whose business it was to summon guests to the evening meal.

"That is the supper-bell," said the Captain. "Let us go to tea."

Seeing that Eleanor neither stirred nor answered, Agnes Meacham went to her and touched her shoulder, saying, "Let us go to tea."

"No, I do not wish tea," responded Eleanor. "I will not detain you, however. I will go to my room."

"Oh, come with us," cried the officer heartily. "You are tired, and will be better for some food. And after tea we can talk together."

"Good-by, Captain Meacham," said Eleanor, offering her hand. "I shall not see you again soon. I shall not again trouble you to-night. I shall go to Cherenden on the early train to-morrow, to make preparation for the ending of my business there. I will therefore take such rest as I can to-night."

The Commandant took her hand reluctantly.

"I should like to talk further with you," said he. "I should be glad to show you that I intend to act both justly and humanely. I regret that you will go away thinking that I am doing wrong. But God knows that I am trying to be humane as well as right. But sha'n't I see you again before you go?"

"I think not," replied Eleanor, and then she walked rapidly to her own chamber.

While she sat there the darkness came on, and the stars appeared dimly through the heated, dust-laden air. One after another of the sounds of the town died away. The boy ceased his whistle, the long-drawn tones of countrymen on the streets tortured the ear no longer, and the youth retired, with their vacant laugh, to other places—even the negro passed out of hearing with his dolorous wails about his "darlin'."

At last only the voluptuous south wind was audible, sighing through the mighty oaks and whis-

pering among sleeping flowers, and after a while she experienced a sensation of quiet and resignation which steeped her senses in restful composure.

She was somewhat irritated when she heard an impatient knock at her door, but it was a relief to find that it was only her friend Agnes Meacham.

"Why, Agnes!" cried Eleanor. "What time is it?"

"Half-past eleven," answered the other. "But did you think I would let you go away without seeing you again?"

"I scarcely know what I thought about that," answered Eleanor, pressing her cold hands against her aching head. "I suppose I did not think of it at all."

"Well," pursued her friend, "I have had quite an argument with my husband. It seems to be a very, very hard matter to manage, since he has shown me all the obstacles in the way. But we need not despair just yet. Come and talk with us."

"There seems to be no use to press it further," returned the teacher despondingly. "I should as well let it rest, it appears to me."

"No, no," protested Agnes Meacham, energetically. "Come with me. He is waiting for us."

They found the Commandment in the private sitting-room where she had left husband and wife three or four hours before. He was pacing the floor impatiently. On their entrance, however, he bade them welcome, closed the door and proceeded to speak.

"Hear me through," said he, still standing. "My orders are very brief and very positive. I am to cause my men to arrest any and all persons named in lists sent to me. I do not prepare these lists. I do not see them till they are sent to me. I am authorized to make arrests on my own judgment, and of my own will; and I am invited to suggest additional names to those reported by others to my superior officers. But I am not allowed any discretion in arresting those whose names are forwarded to me. So far, I have not suggested a single name; nor have we arrested any man who was not on the lists. I am inclined to take hold of this man Taylor on general principles, for I learn that he is a malicious, low, busybody playing on the negroes for his own gain. I also learn that he was a very cruel overseer in the days of slavery, and that he has treated several negroes brutally within the last few years. But, as I have stated, I have been, as it seems to me I ought to be,—except in very peculiar cases,—purely an executive officer. I certainly have no authority to release a prisoner. I should exercise authority, in a case of life and death, to the extent of liberating a man from jail, under such guard as might appear necessary. But your case is not of this kind. You see that the release, on my own judgment merely, of a single prisoner, might subject me to a court-martial, and might render me powerless, for all time, to afford any real relief to the object of my mistaken humanity."

"I see the force of what you say," said the teacher gloomily.

"But don't let that dishearten you," pursued he,

replying mostly to her tone of voice. "I believe that the general commanding this district has some faith in my judgment. I know he does not doubt my loyalty or my courage to perform my duties. It is possible that I can make such representations to him concerning your two friends as will move him to grant your request. I have never asked any such favor of him—or any favor whatever. He may feel that he can afford to trust me. Would your two friends observe their paroles?"

"I would stake my life on it!" exclaimed Eleanor.

"H—m!" said the officer. "It would try the nerve of even a brave man, and test the conscience of a very honorable one. No one can foretell the result of a prosecution for Ku Kluxing."

"It could not cost one his life, could it?" asked Eleanor, nervously.

"Not directly," answered the Captain; "but a term of several years in a Northern penitentiary, which might be one's sentence if convicted, might cost a man his life, and would certainly cause him great misery."

"It would be a trial," said Eleanor in a low voice. "Still, I feel sure that neither Mr. Huntley nor Mr. Vaughn would fail you."

"What about the young men—Jarvis—Jenkins—what's his name? That countryman from the same neighborhood?"

"Oh, Jernigan—Thomas Jernigan?" said Eleanor. "What about him?"

"Well," said the Captain, "he looks to be a very good-natured, dull, harmless sort of a fellow."

"We are not after any Jernigan, Arthur," cried his wife rather petulantly. "Let us come back to the men whose cases are before you."

"The matter of Jernigan is not quite so irrelevant as it may seem to you, my dear," returned her husband, "Listen. To liberate only two men, both of whom are prominent and wealthy—"

"Mr. Vaughn is said to be not at all wealthy," interrupted the teacher.

"It's pretty much the same," proceeded the Captain. "His parents own a lot of land, and have considerable means, and he ranks rather among the aristocracy. Now, as I started to say, it might look suspicious to set free two such men, and only those two. An officer, so doing or seeking to do so, might be suspected of being influenced by bribery or social considerations, while to be kind to a very poor and humble person would indicate only kindness of heart and motives of justice."

"I see," cried his wife with enthusiasm. "We'll get Mr. Jernigan liberated also; and that will make it all right for your reputation. Of course, let us include Mr. Jernigan."

"Not so fast," said the Captain. "It's not clear that anybody will get off. I only suggest this man, who seems to be a good sort of person, and on whom his family seem to depend, so as to satisfy doubts of one's motives."

Eleanor now spoke kindly and earnestly of the simple-minded Tom and his sister.

"Now," continued Captain Meacham, "I will

do all I can for you. It is just this. I will go to ——, the capital of this State, where General —— is. I can reach there to-morrow night. I will speak to him that night or the following day—as soon as I can get a hearing. I will urge him, not only by your arguments and statements, Miss Eleanor, but on my own account, to permit me to release those three men on parole. I believe that all three men are as clear of Ku Kluxing as I am. I believe, on your assurance mostly, but somewhat from my own opinion of them, that they will respect their promises to come when called for, for I believe that proud, dare-devil Huntley will make the other two toe the mark if they attempt to shirk. And I'll require him, if I succeed, to stand surety for the other two."

"And they for him, of course," suggested Mrs. Meacham, with a business air.

"No, indeed," cried the officer, laughing loudly. "They wouldn't add a thread's strength to his undertaking. He'd wring the neck of either one of them that tried to bring him to jail or trial."

"You are harsh," remonstrated Eleanor Field.

"Pardon me. I did not mean to offend you. But I must confess that I have only spoken my opinion of that silent, haughty man. However, you have my plan. You will know the result before the close of the week. So, if you won't stay here with us, you can go to Cherenden and possess your soul in patience, for three or four days."

"And you won't send in your resignation until you hear from us?" pleaded Mrs. Meacham.

Eleanor did not see much promise of success in the officer's scheme; but it was plain that

whether he could or not, it was the most he would do for her, and she therefore felt bound to forego further argument or request. She agreed to withhold her resignation from the school until the captain had exhausted his efforts to procure the liberation of the prisoners, and the early train next morning carried her back to the village.

CHAPTER XXI

Eleanor's promise to withhold her resignation of the school proved, however, harder to keep than she had thought it would. In less than forty-eight hours after her return to Cherenden it appeared to her doubtful whether she would be allowed to retain her situation, or at least have any pupils to teach. On the Tuesday morning after her visit to the county-seat, though the weather was calm and fine, she was met by only twenty pupils—the number on the school roll being thirty-four. Most of these twenty conducted themselves about as usual; but three of them were negligent and sullen, and she had to reprove two for impertinent language. Four of them had to be kept in at recess and compelled to study again, and recite one or more lessons of the early morning. During the recess at twelve o'clock she observed that there was little playing among the pupils, but that nearly all of them kept at a distance from the school-room and seemed engaged in earnest conversation. She naturally suspected that this evil turn of affairs was the result, either of seven arrests made in or near the village during the afternoon and night of Monday, or particularly of the arrest of Huntley and Vaughn, the most prominent persons hitherto taken. The arrest of Huntley was well calculated to excite the children, for, in addition to his importance in their eyes otherwise, he was

the chief trustee of the school, and, she knew, greatly respected and admired by them. She also knew that Vaughn's gentle and friendly manners rendered him popular with all the inhabitants of the place. She was strongly confirmed in her suspicion by seeing the children constantly and steadily eyeing her during the day. She could not imagine whether they suspected her of complicity in the arrests, or whether they only condemned her for showing no sign of sympathy with the distress and alarm of the community, or whether they grew only more opposed to her as the arrests went on. She feared that her journey to the county-seat had become known, and occurring as it did immediately on the arrest of Huntley and Vaughn, and being followed in a few hours by the arrest of several others in and near the town, whom she might be expected to know,—though she did not know one of these last,—the citizens, or at least these children, had come to impute to her an active participation in what they considered the grievous persecution of their people.

Tortured as she was by such an apprehension, it was difficult for her to remain silent. Her inclination was to make public her visit to the military post, its purpose, and all the facts attending it, and then resign her position, and go back home. But as often as that course suggested itself, her judgment assured her that by adopting it she might most effectually prevent the liberation of her friends. Moreover, the bare mention of her intimacy with Captain Meacham and his wife, and of her application to him in consequence

of such intimacy, might suggest to the ignorant people about her inability to deliver from the imprisonment whomsoever she would—which would, in a measure, make her responsible for any man's remaining in jail.

There was no one to whom she could go for counsel. Any granite boulder would have been as available as Rachel Norton. Mr. Williams was too much wrought up to be capable of dispassionate advice, and he was counsel for several of the prisoners. Margaret Mason was too much interested in William Huntley to be expected to judge with impartiality; and besides, it would be little short of brutal to put her to such a test. The two remaining trustees would amount to nothing in a dilemma of this gravity. If William Huntley had been there she might have gone to him, cold and distant and gloomy as he was, for she was persuaded that no genuine and virtuous distress would be altogether slighted by him, no difficulty or responsibility evaded. But, alas, the one clear intellect, the one truly brave heart to her in all that region—except the intellect and heart of Margaret Mason—chafed within the walls of a common jail. A thrill of horror shot through her as she now thought of that proud, gallant, accomplished man breathing the foul vapors of a dungeon and sharing the lot and the company of vile midnight assassins.

And her obdurate and impractical visitor was a millstone about her neck. This woman, known to all the village to be a New Englander, and seen by them to glare and glower at every person and everything she encountered, was likely to be

somewhat associated in the minds of the people with the misfortunes they were undergoing. No reasoning person could believe that such a woman could contribute, in the least, to the enforcement of the laws and the orders of the chief executive officer of the United States. But she was here, she was a person whose sentiments were in all probability against the inhabitants, and she was Eleanor Field's close friend and in some sense her guest. The very intangibleness of the connection between this woman and the prosecutions, and of her connection with the teacher, was, in the circumstances, calculated to heighten the feeling of opposition to the latter. Whatever we are unable to measure or account for we estimate out of all proportion with what we see, especially when our minds are already excited. A terror-stricken community finds in every new or strange appearance fresh cause for apprehension and alarm. No one intimated to Eleanor Field, by word or action, that she was thus visited on account of her association with Rachel Norton; but knowing mankind as she did, and knowing the ignorance and prejudice of the people of the place as she did, it was plain to Eleanor that her well-meaning old friend was a fresh weight dragging her down.

On Wednesday, the second day after her return, there were but fifteen pupils at school. It appeared to her that these were more set against her than they had been the day before. Even Jake Haxwell was sullen. Not one of the advanced scholars was there, not even Jennie Lane. Some of those who came, while speaking to her or re-

citing lessons, exhibited a nervousness which indicated positive dread of her. This was to her the cruelest blow of all, indicating, as it did, that she was held to be malignant and dangerous.

Mr. Williams did not show himself at dinner that day. On inquiry of his melancholy wife, Eleanor learned that he had gone to the county-seat on an early freight train, in company with some newly arrested clients and their guard. Mrs. Williams remarked, after a long pause, that the teacher ate very little, and looked unusually weary. The latter avoided any positive answer, and soon quitted the table. There was no disagreement between the two; but it seemed best to the teacher that they should be together as little as their relations would allow.

No tidings had come, so far, from Captain Meacham or his wife. A letter came to Eleanor from her mother, but it only brought new pain to the reader; for Mrs. Field had learned something of the occurrences in this section, and being, as she stated in her letter, quite ill and debilitated, she had given expression to regrets and apprehensions. The accounts which had reached her were, of course, greatly exaggerated beyond the facts, lamentable as these were; but as they furnished the mother her only information she naturally adopted them. The daughter now saw her mistake in avoiding all mention of such things in her letters to her family, and she wondered how she could ever have fallen into the error of absolute silence in regard to the situation. She had intended to break the intelligence gradually, but between her anxiety to postpone a thing unpleas-

ant alike to her and to them and her hope that she would soon be able to inform them that the trouble was over, she had failed to give them any information whatever.

The answer to this letter was not to be postponed, and she at once set about writing it. Her first efforts were dismal failures. Sheet after sheet had to be torn up and thrown aside—sheets scrawled thick with interlineations and blotted with erasures, or stained with bitter tears. In this labor she became unconscious of her material surroundings, till a palpable diminution of light caused her to look through the window near which she wrote. A dark cloud was swiftly passing between her and the declining sun, and sent forth lightning and loud peals of thunder. In a moment rain began to fall, and she paused and rested, watching the pour of water, the many streams that hurried over the ground, the long-limbed oaks swaying before the blast, and the jagged lightning that illuminated the obscurity with frequent flashes.

Soon the storm cloud swept away to the east, and the sun, setting amid flying remnants of gold and crimson clouds, poured floods of soft amber light over field and forest shining with raindrops. She resumed her task, struggling with a language which seemed resolutely obdurate to her efforts for expression, and struggling with her own complicated and exasperating thoughts. She made better progress now. Her persistent effort, assisted by the freshness of the evening air, carried her gradually into a more cheerful train of thought, and into more felicitous expression. Yet

the summons to the melancholy evening meal found her still engaged in the task.

The old lawyer had not returned. He was to remain at the county-seat till the next day—perhaps longer. So she moped through a dull half hour with her hostess, and after that went back to her chamber, where she wrote till midnight.

CHAPTER XXII

The next morning, Thursday, she called on her way to school, at the post, posted her letter, and inquired for her mail. There was none for her. For an instant she was inclined to resent the protracted silence of Agnes Meacham; but she promptly put aside all such thought, assuring herself that only some sufficient cause could have led her lifelong friend to preserve silence in the existing circumstances.

This charitable thought, however, was largely the result of an improved temper of mind. She was now enjoying, temporarily at least, that capacity of endurance which often comes to men—and oftener to women—after violent perturbation of the spirit. Such rallies are sometimes so sudden and so pronounced that they appear to be a positive inspiration or the work of a special providence. Probably they are only the reaction which nature provides to succeed any excessive excitement either in the material or in the spiritual system, and are therefore no more remarkable than any other natural occurrences. But often the change is so great, and the comfort derived from it so intense, that it is not strange that we should regard the relief an actual and miraculous illumination of the soul. This was her feeling as she went, stronger and more contented than she had been for many days, to the unpromising employment of the school-room.

Her feelings were scarcely chilled by the dis-

covery that only twelve pupils were in attendance. It was quite as she expected it would be, and she took charge with composure and some confidence. Her self-possession enabled her to influence these twelve more thoroughly than she had done of late. The children were languid and listless at first; but as the day wore on they caught something of her energy and became cheerful. She had to be very careful; for she recognized occasionally in herself a tendency to hasten too much, and also an inclination to laugh at nothing. These things convinced her that she was hysterical, and that her lightness of spirit was itself evidence of a new form of nervous derangement. But she controlled herself, and at the close of school hours, she was able to carry with her the pleasant conviction of a good day's work and tolerably appreciative children.

At dinner she met Mr. Williams. The old gentleman looked fatigued; but his eye was bright, and he talked freely and agreeably. Even his sad wife seemed somewhat animated. The conversation gave no intimation of the cause of this improved temper of the household; yet Eleanor constantly imagined that the lawyer was on the point of throwing light upon it.

There befell her another reaction—a depression succeeding her, for those days, unwonted cheerfulness. As soon as the meal was ended she sought her room, and lay down on the sofa near one of the front windows to rest. As she fell into a light slumber she heard the lawyer's voice below stairs in rapid and earnest speech to his wife. After what seemed to her but a moment, she

heard that voice crying to her in loud, clear tones. Rushing, half-awake, to the door, she called to know what he had said.

"Look out of your front window!" yelled the lawyer from the front piazza. "Ha, ha, ha! Look out of your front window, Miss Field. Quick, quick!"

She ran to the window and looked. She saw three men on horseback going from the town toward the country. At the same glance she saw that one of them was a long, stooping countryman riding a mule, that the second was a delicate man with a crumpled silk hat, bestriding a long, gaunt sorrel steed, and that the third was tall and slender and rode a coal-black horse that fretted to be allowed a greater speed.

"Thank God! Thank God!" she exclaimed, and fell fainting to the floor.

CHAPTER XXIII

Perhaps it is commonly the case, perhaps it is not; but the narrator of this story, who has several times had the misfortune to faint, has invariably experienced, immediately on restoration to consciousness, the return of his thoughts to the identical matter on which they were engaged at the beginning of his syncope. So it was with Eleanor Field. On recovering her senses—eight or ten minutes after her fall—her first thought was to inspect further the passing horsemen, and she accordingly sprang up and hastened to the window through which she had seen them. She was greatly surprised to find the street empty, and without even a haze of dust to show that any rider had gone by that way. It was only after considering the fact of her having risen from the floor that she realized that her joy at the sight of the liberated prisoners had caused her to faint.

When she heard—as she did a few seconds later—the sound of a galloping horse in the street she was inclined to question that conclusion; but on looking again she discovered only one man and a single horse—a tall, neatly-dressed negro riding, *ventre a terre*, a black horse very like Huntley's Delta, and as full of fire as that spirited mare. Then she said aloud to herself, "That must be faithful Josh, hurrying to overtake his master on his way home." And so it was. Josh, it was learned afterward, had been notified, through a telegram from Huntley that morning, to bring

in the horses of the three neighbors Huntley, Vaughn and Jernigan, to meet them when they should arrive on the afternoon freight train, and had done so, and was now following them home. Recollecting that the lawyer had called her attention to the liberated men, and that she had so far made no answer to him, she ran down stairs, hoping that she might still be in time to satisfy any suspicion he might have of her fainting. She found him in the hall talking energetically to his wife.

"Well," said he, when the teacher made her appearance, "did you see three men go by? They were what I intended to direct your attention to; but as I have heard nothing further from you I have wondered if you understood me.

"Yes," returned Eleanor, with as much composure as she could command, "I saw Mr. Huntley, Mr. Vaughn, and Mr. Jernigan (he was the third, was he not?) ride past. I was very glad to see that they had been released from prison."

"It was a curious thing," continued Mr. Williams. "I went to town on Tuesday, in behalf—professionally, you understand"—and here he assumed a severe and lofty voice—"of one of the men arrested here early that morning. I saw our three friends at the jail. Huntley told me that he had no idea when they would be turned loose—if ever. I offered my services to him. I could do that without violence to professional dignity, as he is a—a connection of mine, and I had no idea of charging any fee for what I might do for him. I did not make any such offer to

Vaughn or Jernigan, you comprehend, Miss Field, or any one else.

"Certainly," said Eleanor. "I understand the purely personal and friendly nature of your position."

"To be sure," cried Mr. Williams, with satisfaction. "I knew you would at once see that I did nothing—could consent to nothing—that would conflict with the dignity or the ethics of the profession. The ethics, you understand, might be—"

"I see, I see," said Eleanor, gravely. "So Mr. Huntley responded to your purely personal and kind offer by—"

"Purely personal—not professional," persisted the lawyer.

"Which no doubt a gentleman of Mr. Huntley's intelligence at once recognized and appreciated. And he answered—"

"He expressed himself almost in your very words. He thanked me and gave me to know that *he* knew that there was nothing professional in the offer, though of course I might have to do a lawyer's work for him. That was his answer."

"Certainly," said Eleanor, resignedly.

Mr. Williams, after repeating twice more that his offer was not professional, proceeded to state that Huntley told him that he would not trouble him just then, but would communicate with him as soon as he received some further information as to the persons informing against him and the particulars of the charges preferred.

"I left him very soon," pursued the lawyer. "I afterward made some inquiry of Captain Meacham,

the officer in command, concerning the charges against Huntley; and while I was about it, I took occasion to commend in strong language the general character and lives of Huntley, Vaughn, and Jernigan."

"To which the officer no doubt paid attention," suggested Eleanor.

"He seemed to," assented the Squire, pulling up his high standing collar, and nodding his head several times.

"He ought to have done so," said Eleanor. "You knew perfectly what you spoke of. And a gentleman of your position was to be presumed to be thoroughly assured before vouching for any man."

"You express it well," cried the Squire. "That was just the case. And Meacham is no fool. He knows the difference between men. He fully appreciated all I said. Indeed, I could see that he soon began to experience some regret that he had to keep those three in jail."

"Perhaps that is why he turned them loose," said Eleanor, looking innocent and earnest.

"Ah—well—ah—I can hardly say that," returned the Squire, disclaiming with evident reluctance the influence ascribed to him. "But a—hum—perhaps—perhaps what I said somewhat a—a—contributed to the result."

"You are too modest," protested the teacher, who was anxious that the lawyer should claim and enjoy all the credit of the release of the three neighbors. "You know—as we all know—that, speaking with the emphasis you always employ in things of moment, and speaking also from your

own intimate knowledge of facts, you must have *great* weight."

"Ha, ha!" cried he, vastly delighted. "You are a keen one. You would have made a lawyer. Even an old practitioner can't escape you. There's no fooling you as to what two and two make."

"Well, then," said Eleanor, heartily, "you will have, must have the thanks of all the people hereabouts. For of course those three are guiltless of the horrible crime of Ku Kluxing, and must have been the victims of some mistake."

"To be sure," said the lawyer. "But of course a man mustn't blow his own trumpet."

"No. But the truth is the truth, and should always be known in connection with praise-worthy actions—especially when one performs such actions with no purpose or hope of personal gain, and when the disclosure of the facts involves no professional advertising of one's self."

"You have it," cried he with great satisfaction—"you have summed up the whole matter in a few choice words."

Then they talked of other things; but Eleanor knew that she had sown seed that would speedily bear fruit. The Squire was sure to claim, in one way or another, the credit for the releases, as he thought himself entitled to do; and his wife, simple-minded as she was, and proud of her vain little husband, was equally sure to spread it among the women. Thus Eleanor would escape all suspicion of having been concerned in the affairs of the prisoners, and be clear of any embarrassment, while enjoying some advantage to

herself, probably, and very great satisfaction, certainly, from their deliverance. It appeared from the lawyer's further account, that Captain Meacham had gone to the military headquarters of the State on Tuesday, after talking with him, and on his return Wednesday night had visited the jail, talked with the three prisoners, received their promise to report to him or to the officer in charge at Cherenden, once a week, until further notified, and had then discharged them from custody.

On Tuesday afternoon the teacher visited Miss Norton at the hotel. The aged spinster was in no temper to discuss the situation—the weather was too “hot” for her; Mrs. Anderson's fare had been rather greasy; that “big mouthed Clarissy” had been too loud and garrulous; and, worst of all, she had heard Colonel Jenkins discourse, at dinner, the day before, concerning his bloodshedding during the war. Miss Norton described him as a “great, big, long-legged fellow, with a yellow face, a waxed mustache, and a voice like a mill all out of gear.”

“Why,” cried she, “he talked about shooting Yankees as a Christian man would hardly talk about killing wolves or bears.”

“How did you come to listen to him at all?” asked Eleanor. “Where did you meet him? Why did you stay to hear such talk?”

“It was at the table. He was twenty foot from me, I guess; but he roared and bawled so that I couldn't help hearing him.”

“But you need not mind that kind of vamping. I have heard Union soldiers declaim in pretty

much the same fashion. You know Henry McLaren, in our neighborhood, speaks sometimes of his slaughter of multitudes of 'rebels.' "

"That's so," returned Miss Norton. "But it don't make one fool's talk any more bearable for another fool to talk in the same way. Did you ever hear that rebel Colonel?"

"I heard him perform in exactly that way, the first day I spent in Cherenden," answered Eleanor. "I know what you must have heard from him. I suffered as you have suffered, but I believe that Colonel Jenkins has not made me a whit more unhappy than I would have been. Besides, you may derive some comfort from the information—"

"What comfort in connection with that boastful brute?" cried Miss Norton.

"He was arrested and sent to jail this morning."

"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised!" ejaculated the spinster.

CHAPTER XXIV

Miss Norton now "guessed" that it was time for her to go home. She said that her old bones were so tired of the rough streets of Cherenden, and her old head was so confused with the firing of pistols, the singing of negroes, the tales of bloodshed, the arrests of Ku Kluxes, and the "general mixture of the hull country," that she must retire to some more quiet place. She admitted that her visit had probably done no good for herself or any one else, and that she "hadn't ought to have come." But she would think over matters when she got back to New England.

When Margaret entered the teacher's room at five o'clock, having taken Miss Norton to the station, Eleanor observed an air of restlessness and hesitation altogether new in the self-possessed young lady of Oak Hall; and this continued for some minutes, and to such a degree that the teacher became distressed, and inquired if she was ill or in trouble? Margaret sprang from her chair, and going to the teacher bent over her, taking her head with both hands.

"You are right," cried she. "I am agitated. I want to say something which perhaps I ought not to say, for I may embarrass you. But—I know all about it."

"About what?" asked Eleanor in alarm.

"Oh, the release of the three prisoners."

"Well, they were released, if you mean your cousin and his two neighbors."

"To be sure; and it was your dear, sweet self that had it done."

"Nonsense!" protested Eleanor. "Have you heard Squire Williams tell?"

"Indeed I have; and poor old uncle's boasting only confirmed the belief I had. Did you expect to keep me in the dark? I knew of your trip to the county-seat. I knew before that of your intimacy with Captain Meacham's wife; I knew you wished to do me a kindness; I knew you could present more potent arguments to the Commandant than all the inhabitants of the county together; I knew that Uncle Williams had no weight at all with that officer. On the first train after you went there, as appeared from uncle's statement, Captain Meacham went to military headquarters for the State, and immediately after his return the three men were released on parole—without bond, pledge, or security of any kind. The case was simple enough. Those three prisoners are not of the material of which Ku Kluxes are made; one of them had befriended you, in his office of school trustee, and he is a cousin to me who have tried to be your friend; and the other two are my friends and neighbors."

"But—but—"

"Never mind," continued Margaret. "The idea of your going, at the beginning of the week, to town, to do shopping, was simply preposterous. There now! You have repaid me a hundred times over—a hundred times. And you are the best and brightest and bravest woman I ever knew."

"But," cried Eleanor, "you must not—"

"Of course I shall never say a word to any one without your consent, or unless I see it necessary in some emergency. And so I feel easy now, and hope you are also."

And being sensible women, the two friends dropped the subject, dried their eyes, and discussed a new style of dress-skirt.

They were soon interrupted by Nancy, who announced that Mr. Huntley was below stairs, and desired to speak with the two ladies. They went down at once, and found him sitting on the piazza, talking with Mrs. Williams. He made known at once his object, saying:

"Miss Field, it is feared that we have scarlet fever in Cherenden. Minnie Haxwell shows symptoms of the disease and Laura Cogburn (whom you sent home because she seemed ill) appears to be affected in about the same way. Dr. Flagman thinks it is scarlet fever. Dr. Thompson is in doubt. If the fever is here we shall think it our duty to close the school, to prevent its spread in the community. I imagine that prompt action will enable the physicians and village authorities to confine the disease, if it is here, so that, in two or three weeks, we shall be clear of it. I give you this information in order that you may not be surprised."

"And what shall I do?" inquired the teacher.

"Nothing," answered he, "except conform to such directions as the trustees will give you, and keep clear of the infection."

"So," interrupted Margaret, "Eleanor is only to be prepared, and to await orders."

"Exactly," returned Huntley.

"It won't be long, do you think, before the disease will be under control? And the teacher can just take rest, in case of suspension of the school."

"Yes," answered Huntley, smiling. "Miss Field, I hope, will suffer no enforced vacation. But if she does, she must make the best of it—that is, take care of herself and wait patiently till she is told to resume work."

"Her salary will not be affected?" asked Margaret.

"By no means. A pestilence is the act of God—though much promoted and prolonged by the folly of man. She must not allow herself to be worried."

Eleanor said nothing. Huntley soon went away, and Margaret with him.

On the following morning, having heard nothing further, Eleanor went to the academy. There were fifteen or sixteen children at the school when she arrived. She asked these about Laura Cogburn, but none of them had heard anything of her. Young Tomlinson, the Colonel's grandson, her latest new pupil, suggested that his grandfather might be able to tell something of the sick child, when he returned that way home, and offered to keep a look-out for the old gentleman. He added that his grandfather had ridden to the village with him, nearly an hour before, to answer, as he understood, a summons from Mr. Huntley to meet him at Mr. Cogburn's store. This intelligence gave the teacher some comfort; for it indicated that Huntley had called the trustees together, and that she would soon receive from them a definite order, either to suspend the

school or to continue teaching. Her knowledge of Huntley assured her that he would not leave the matter in doubt. She, of course, did not refer to what she had heard at Squire Williams's the day before, nor disclose any uneasiness.

Receiving no communication, she opened the school when the academy clock struck nine. Two of the Cogburn children arrived just at the beginning of the exercises. She asked them about their sick sister, but they (with a toss of the head which implied that they were not expected to report anything to her) told her she was pretty well.

A little before ten o'clock, and after she had heard a primary class recite mathematics, she heard the sound of a horse's hoofs near the front door of the building. A minute later, William Huntley entered, his long-roweled spurs jingling as he walked. Doffing his broad-brimmed felt hat, and removing the gauntlet from his right hand, he advanced toward her at his usual rapid stride. When he arrived within a few feet of the platform where she sat he halted and, bowing, said:

"Good morning, Miss Field. Pardon my interruption of your work, but I come to announce to you, and your pupils, and through them to the patrons of the school, a decision just reached by the board of trustees."

Every boy and girl had watched his progress up the aisle in silent astonishment. Now every one of them seemed to have found a tongue for whispering. Huntley turned at once toward them, and awed them into silence with a look. He proceeded:

"On hearing it rumored that Laura Cogburn,

a pupil in this school, was ill with scarlet fever, the trustees met together this morning, in order to investigate the report, and if it should prove correct, determine what ought to be done in the school. Attend now, all of you children, to what I am about to say, for we are not willing that any false report of our opinions or of our decision shall be circulated in the community. Dr. Thompson, the physician attending Laura, has not made up his mind as to her disease." He now spoke very slowly and distinctly. "He says that it has several of the symptoms of scarlet fever. But he thinks it quite possible that it is what is often known as 'black measles,' or that it may be only a case of severe cold, with fever, and that the flushed face may be entirely the result of the fever, and the throat trouble the result of the cold—that is, ordinary sore throat. If it is an attack of fever, it may be only scarlatina—a very mild form of the disease. However, the trustees, after hearing Dr. Thompson speak, and after considering the situation, have decided that it is advisable to suspend the exercises of the school during this week, and until further notice. Therefore, the pupils are not to come here again this week. Notice will be given whether the exercises are to be resumed next week, or not; and every parent, guardian, or other person having charge of pupils will be informed, before next Monday, whether the school will be operated next week. Now bear in mind what I have said to you. You are not to give people your notions about the matter as the decision of the trustees. We only want to be prudent. We doubt if there

is any danger. But we wish to make you as safe as possible against a dangerous disease. We want you to stay at home. There is no use in turning you loose from school, if you go running over the village. There is no need for a panic. Go straight home, every one of you, and tell, as well as you can, what I have said to you. You will also tell it at home, that your teacher, Miss Field, knew nothing of Laura Cogburn's having scarlet fever till long after she sent her home on Friday; and I tell you, tell your parents also, that as soon as Laura Cogburn complained of being unwell, on Friday, Miss Field sent her home. Will you do all I bid you?"

"Yes, sir," "yes, sir," cried the children all over the room.

"Very well," said Huntley. "Now Miss Field will add what she sees fit. And you are not to leave the school-room till she tells you to go."

And then, as if determined to see the authority of the teacher recognized, he seated himself in a chair near hers, whence he commanded a view of all the scholars.

Eleanor repeated part of what he had spoken, and then declared the school closed till further notice. Then the children gathered up their belongings, and went away slowly and quietly. But not one came to her to say good-by, except the Tomlinson boy. He approached with outstretched hand, and said, heartily:

"Good-by, Miss Field. I hope we'll all be here next Monday."

"Good-by, Charley," returned she, pressing his hand. "I'm sure you will, if you can."

The boy saw the moisture in her eyes, and responded in kind, saying, "You can depend on that! I'll be glad to come back to you!"

"Well, Charley," said Huntley, rising and meeting the lad who now approached him. "You are so grown that I did not recognize you at first. When did you enter?"

"On Friday, Mr. Huntley. How are you?"

"You've had a short course. However, you'll all be here pretty soon. You like it here, I know from the way you speak."

"Yes, sir," replied the boy. "I think I'll get along all right. Good-by, sir."

When this last pupil had passed out, Huntley said a few words about the uncertainty of the disease of the child, and started to his horse. At the door, however, he paused, and said, with some embarrassment, "You recollect that this enforced vacation, whether long or short, has nothing to do with your salary, Miss Field. You are employed for the term."

Then he mounted and galloped away.

So here was another blow. The turn in her favor during the past week had led her to expect decided accessions to the school and improved behavior on the part of the pupils; and she had consequently acquired a new interest in her work. This unforeseen check, though of course in no wise attributable to any fault of hers, would operate, she feared, to chill any enthusiasm concerning the school and any rising opinion in her favor. Her salary would go on; but she was not teaching for the small salary alone. A larger school, a larger sphere, a more agreeable employment were

what she had begun to promise herself. Now she might have to go back and build anew; she might, in case the disease became a plague, be compelled to go away, for of course she could not count upon being paid for many weeks of vacation.

CHAPTER XXV

On Tuesday morning Dr. Thompson pronounced Laura Cogburn's disease to be scarlet fever of a malignant type. This intelligence so excited and alarmed the inhabitants of Cherden that before nine o'clock it was spread even so far as the secluded and remote residence of Squire Williams. Mr. Williams first learned it from a negro going out into the country to his work, and about noon a white lady passing along the street informed Mrs. Williams that a second case had appeared in the household of Alfred Joiner, a tinner living at some distance from Mr. Cogburn. It was some comfort to Eleanor that this child was not one of her pupils, and therefore could not have contracted the sickness at school.

At dusk, Margaret Mason, coming from the village, insisted on taking the teacher home with her to spend the rest of the week. Eleanor, although it cost her no little self-denial, declined to go, giving as her reason her conviction that she ought to be near any of the sick pupils, so as to be kept advised of their condition, and, in case of a critical turn among any of them, to be at hand to assist in nursing them. Margaret suggested that she was not called upon to render any such service in any circumstances, and also suggested that she would be unwise to expose herself to the contagion; but the teacher stood firm, and had to be left where she was.

On Wednesday morning little Minnie Haxwell was reported quite ill with the fever, and in the afternoon Eleanor heard that she was worse; and toward sunset Dr. Thompson, in answer to Mrs. Williams's call to him as he rode past, stated that the case had become serious. Eleanor, who heard him, inquired whether any one was assisting Mrs. Haxwell in nursing the child. On learning that no one was expected there that night except an old lady, she at once put into a small bag such things as she thought might be needed for herself or for the child during the night, and proceeded to Widow Haxwell's. Mrs. Williams attempted to dissuade her, reminding her, when other arguments failed, of the unpleasant relations existing between the child's mother and herself.

"I have not forgotten," replied Eleanor. "I fear I never shall entirely forget the treatment I received from her. And Minnie is not now my pupil. But that makes no difference in a matter of plain duty."

"But she may insult you," urged the Squire's gentle, timid wife. "She may go so far as to order you out of her house; for although not a vicious woman, she is a grossly ignorant and rough one."

"If I am not allowed to stay," said Eleanor, "I shall come home no worse off than I am now—indeed, happier than I now am, for I shall then enjoy the satisfaction of feeling that I have attempted to assist the child and relieve her mother. But she will hardly carry her resentment to that length."

So she walked to the house of sickness, more than half a mile distant, carrying her bag, and preparing herself for all possible contingencies. The few inhabitants watched her with curiosity as she stepped rapidly along the streets; and she heard one rough-looking man wonder where "that Yankee school-teacher" was going so fast at that time of day.

She called at one drug store of the village and inquired what the closing hour was, and where a prescription clerk could be found after closing. The proprietor answered politely, but took the liberty of asking if there was likely to be a call for medicine at any late hour of the night, and if so, on whose account. She informed him that she was going to Mrs. Haxwell's to attend Minnie, and that there might be need to have other medicine than was now at that home.

"Well, Miss," said the man heartily, "it's very good of you to do that. Nearly everybody's afraid to go there now. I'll be here till eleven o'clock. After that you'll find Mr. Lever, the clerk, in the room up-stairs. You'll just ring this bell," showing her a bell at the side of the door.

The Haxwell cottage looked dark and lonely amid the large oaks that reached far above it and spread their long arms all around it. There was no light visible from the street, but on reaching the open front door she perceived a dull glimmer in the hall, coming from a back chamber. She entered without knocking, and made her way to the room from which the light proceeded. Pausing at the door of the room, she saw a dim lamp sitting on the mantel, with no shade upon it ex-

cept what was furnished by the smoke which stood thick and dark upon the cracked chimney. Entering the door she saw on her right, in the corner, a plain, high, narrow bedstead; and on the bed, half covered with a sheet, lay a small figure. At the side of the bed, with her face turned toward the bed, sat a short, thin, stooped woman, dressed in black. The air felt hot and close, and reeked with the odor of burning oil. As she approached the bed the little figure moved and attempted to rise, and a faint, weak voice murmured, "Oh, Miss Eleanor!" half in welcome, half in wail.

"Keep still, dear," said the teacher gently, and going to her, laid her hand softly on the hot, dry brow of the child. "I shall be with you for some time—all night, or longer—and we shall have time enough to talk when you get better."

The child lifted a thin, trembling hand and touched the cool fingers of her visitor, but spoke no more. Eleanor turned to the aged woman who sat regarding her.

"You are Mrs. Harris, I presume?"

"Yes, ma'am," replied the woman in a low, thin voice. "And you are—"

"Eleanor Field, the teacher. Let me say a few words to you where they will not worry the child."

Minnie smiled faintly, and closed her eyes, when the two walked across the room.

"I have not yet seen Mrs. Haxwell," said Eleanor to Mrs. Harris. "She may be a little—startled to see me unless she knows of my being here. Would you mind going to her and telling

her that I have come to sit with Minnie and attend to her to-night?"

Mrs. Harris looked surprised, and hesitated a moment; then she signified her readiness to do as requested, and went out of the room. A few seconds later Eleanor heard an exclamation of astonishment and inquiry, in the yard back of the cottage, in the familiar harsh voice of Mrs. Haxwell; but she caught none of the words, and did not hear the voice again. Mrs. Harris returned pretty soon, and reported that she had delivered the teacher's message. But she said nothing more, and resumed her chair at the bedside, after casting a look at Eleanor indicating doubt and uneasiness. The teacher said nothing, but busied herself in straightening the room as far as she could do so without noise. Then she sat by a window and waited.

Half an hour passed. It was now quite dark. Still Mrs. Haxwell did not come. Eleanor turned her face to the window near her and looked out into the night. Once the child stirred and called for water; and Mrs. Harris went out to the back piazza to get fresh water. Eleanor heard her exchange a few words with some one there—no doubt, Mrs. Haxwell. After a little, the creaking of the well-chain was heard, and a little later Mrs. Harris brought in a glass of which the child tasted, and became silent.

It was clear to the teacher that the mother was not yet willing to make friends with her, yet hesitated to refuse her assistance.

At the end of the half hour Dr. Thompson came. He examined Minnie, and asked her two

or three questions. Then he turned toward the teacher, as if to give her some directions. She requested him to communicate his wishes to Mrs. Harris, to whom, in consequence, they were delivered in Eleanor's hearing. When he appeared to have concluded, Eleanor requested him to go with her to the front veranda. There she said to him:

"Dr. Thompson, I have come here without request. I learned from you that the child was very ill, and that no one besides her mother was nursing her, except Mrs. Harris. I sent word, as soon as I came, about an hour ago, to Mrs. Haxwell of my being here. I have not yet seen her, nor received any response to my message."

"That is very remarkable."

"You remember," continued Eleanor, "that I quit boarding with Mrs. Haxwell to go to Mr. Williams's. Mrs. Haxwell spoke very rudely to me when I went away, and took Minnie from school. I have not seen her nor spoken with her since. I think that she does not care to order me away, yet is unwilling to meet me pleasantly. Perhaps she imagines that I expect an apology from her, but of course I do not. I have come here to do what I can for the child, who seemed fond of me, and to whom I am attached. I would rather have no mention made, now or hereafter, of our past differences. All I ask is to be allowed to nurse the child."

"The woman's a rough, stupid creature, and disgraces herself by her sullenness," returned the Doctor.

"Well," said Eleanor, "would you mind telling

her now that she need do nothing more than barely speak to me concerning the child. I am quite as anxious as she that there shall never be any reference to the past."

"All right," said the Doctor. "I'll see her right away." After a little while, he returned, accompanied by Mrs. Haxwell. The woman looked tired, distressed, and sullen, and paused when near the center of the room, as if uncertain whether to advance or retire. Eleanor rose and walked to her, extending her hand, and saying:

"I hope, Mrs. Haxwell, that Mrs. Harris and I will be able to take care of Minnie to-night. Dr. Thompson will no doubt give us further directions before he goes, so that we may be sure to do what is right."

"Have you ever been with a case of scarlet fever?" asked the mother, after giving the proffered hand a jerk that made it ache.

"Yes; I helped to nurse two children at a neighbor's house two years ago."

"Was they bad?"

"One of them was never seriously sick; but the other was said to be one of the worst cases ever seen there. I sat up three nights in succession with that one—a little girl between seven and eight years of age."

"And Minnie's jist seven last month," said the mother, with a gulp of the throat.

Here the Doctor interposed, saying that he would take Miss Field out on the front piazza, and give her some instructions. Thither they two went, and after explaining the nature of the dis-

ease, he suggested to her to talk as little as possible, at present, with the unreasonable mother.

"I understand," returned Eleanor, calmly. "I came prepared for a great deal that is unpleasant."

"The woman's a fool, in plain English," said he. "She rails at me, more or less, every time I come, though she knows that my work here is, as it always was, pure charity. Anxious and helpless as she is, she snubs and browbeats old Mrs. Harris, and would drive any other woman out of the house. Her villainous beastliness is nearly half that ails the child. She didn't want to see you, just now, and it made me so angry that I told her she was one of the meanest and silliest people I ever saw. But you're not a bit afraid of her; and I rather expect you to be able to freeze her, if you can't do any better."

With this comforting view of the situation, they returned to the sick-room. Mrs. Haxwell gave them a grudging invitation to join her at supper. Eleanor, having no inclination to risk the kind of food that had damaged her health so seriously, declined, and said that she would stay with Minnie while the others supped, and that Mrs. Harris would bring her a biscuit to eat after a while—there being no need for her to eat so soon after her late dinner.

When they were gone the child called to her.

"Why, Minnie," said the teacher, "I hoped you were asleep. What can I do for you?"

"Only come here and let me hold your hand a little," sobbed Minnie.

"Don't cry," said Eleanor, taking the chair at

the bedside and lifting the small, thin hand that lay next to her. "You must not worry over anything. That will make you worse. If you keep quiet I hope you will soon be well."

"I am not worrying," murmured Minnie. "I only want to tell you how glad I am to have you here. I think I feel better already. I was so sorry ma wouldn't let me keep on at school. I've begged her nearly every day since she took me away."

"Don't talk—that's a good child," said Eleanor, gently.

"Just a little more, please. She knew how I loved you, and—and I think she didn't like it."

"Minnie, you must not talk. You are crying now. I shall have to go away if you won't do as I bid you."

"Then I will die," moaned Minnie. "But I'm crying now because I'm so happy to see you and hear your voice. I'll try to mind you, and to get well, if you wish it. But I think I wouldn't be much afraid to die, if you were with me and holding my hand."

"Minnie, won't you say a prayer with me, and then try to sleep?"

"It's early in the night, isn't it?"

"Yes; but some sleep will help you; and praying is always in good season."

"Have you a new prayer for me?"

"Not now. When you get stronger perhaps I can teach you one. Suppose we say the old one, 'Now I lay me down.'"

"Will you say it with me? It seems like God

might be more willing to hear me if you were saying the same words at the same time."

"Very well. I will repeat it with you."

Then she accompanied the child in saying the old, old verses; and after a while the child slept.

Pretty soon Mrs. Harris, the Doctor, and Mrs. Haxwell returned from supper.

As soon as they entered the room the Doctor said, "Now, Mrs. Haxwell, I think you may safely go to bed as soon as you have put your household matters in shape. These two ladies will be able to take care of Minnie."

The child awoke at the sound of her name, and muttered indistinctly some question.

"You keep quiet, Minnie," said Dr. Thompson. "Mrs. Harris and Miss Field will be with you, to see after all your wants."

The mother bustled up to the bed, and asked what she wanted. She received for answer only the words, "Oh, nothing."

"But couldn't you like somethin' to eat?" queried Mrs. Haxwell.

"Let her alone," said the Doctor, shortly.

By this time the mother, obtuse as she was, realized that she was not doing quite the proper thing, and left the bedside, and came to where the other three were standing near the fireplace.

"Well," said she to Eleanor, "I reck'n you kin make yerself at home. Yer've been here before."

"I shall do my best to take care of Minnie during the night," replied the teacher calmly.

"Yes," interposed the physician briskly, "Miss Field and Mrs. Harris will attend to everything.

Go to bed, Mrs. Haxwell. They'll call you when you're needed. I'll be back about midnight."

"Well," returned the widow, "it's a comfort to see somebody interestin' theirselves 'bout poor folk's children. Good night to you all." And then she walked out of the room.

The Doctor soon took leave, and Eleanor Field was left with faded Mrs. Harris and the silent child.

The teacher seated herself at a window. Very soon Mrs. Harris drew a chair near her, and sat down, with a look of expectation on her face. Ordinarily Eleanor would have addressed the woman at once, but now she was so enfeebled by the heat and the odors of the room, and so weary of Mrs. Haxwell's persistent coarseness, that she said nothing, though Mrs. Harris cleared her throat several times by way of invitation to speech.

Finally the latter observed, in a weak, shrill whisper that it was "a mighty hot night." Eleanor assented.

"And it seems to me," pursued Mrs. Harris, "that there's bad smells about here."

"The lamp was unpleasant," returned Eleanor, not looking at her; "but I cleaned that, and I hope it will be better now."

"But seems like I smell cabbage," urged Mrs. Harris.

"That comes from the garden, no doubt," suggested Eleanor.

"'Tain't that," insisted Mrs. Harris. "It comes from nigher than the gyardin. My gyardin

ain't more'n forty foot from my back door; yit I don't have sich a smell as this in my house."

"How else can it be?"

"It's sorter like old cabbage," pursued the old woman. "I wonder if Miss Haxwell have brung cabbage into here. I'll see."

She went around the room, sniffing and muttering to herself. Even the child's bed did not escape investigation, though the searcher walked carefully and touched nothing. Pretty soon the teacher heard her murmur, as she laid hold on a basket in a corner of the room, "I b'lieve on my soul it's here!"

But after tumbling over some paper and other scraps, she confessed that the offensive vegetable was not there. Presently she snuffed the air of the hall several times, and after a pause of five or six seconds went out through the open door. In less than a minute she returned, bringing a basket in her hand, and saying, in a low tone, but one of triumph, "I've got it! I knowed there was cabbage somewheres!"

She was correct. There were five or six heads of cabbage in the basket—stale, rank cabbage whose odor was almost stifling.

"Who could have put them there?" asked the teacher.

"Mrs. Haxwell, of course," responded Mrs. Harris. "I remember it all now. Yisterday, me and her went into the gyardin to git vegetables. We got inguns, an' beans, an' peas, an' beets, an' cabbage. An' atter Miss Haxwell cut three head o' cabbage and was a-ketchin' holt of a fo'th head, I says to her, 'Nancy Haxwell,' says I,

'you've a'ready got three good heads. What do you want with mo'?' They was all as big as my head. Says she, 'I'm a-gittin' of cabbage. You never mind.' Now I thought she har'ly knowed what she was a-doin' of, bein' as Minnie was so sick, an' her mother seemed sorter 'stracted anyhow. So I 'lowed there wasn't no use to git any mo', as them three heads was mo'n enough to last yisterday and to-day. But she 'lowed that there wasn't no use of draggling up her clo'es a-comin' into the gyardin every mornin', in the jew, to cut cabbage; and then she cut five or six mo' heads and brung 'em into the house. An' here they is! And what are we a-gwine to do with 'em?"

Eleanor Field remembered that Mrs. Haxwell's next neighbor had a lot next her garden, where pigs and cows were kept, and where she had lately heard the grunting of hogs. So she took the basket from Mrs. Harris, stole softly out of the back-door, walked to the fence, and threw the decaying vegetables to the animals who could make use of them.

On her return she was warmly complimented by Mrs. Harris; and a liberal sprinkling of the room with spirits of camphor sufficed, after a time, to restore the atmosphere to purity.

Mrs. Harris was prompted by Eleanor's intelligence and decision in the matter of the cabbages to make a closer acquaintance with her. She drew her chair nearer, and proceeded to interrogate her in a low voice.

"They tell me you come from the Nawth. What part did you come from?"

"From New England."

"How fur is that?"

"Not far from a thousand miles from here."

"Sakes o' mercy! And did you come all the way by yourself?"

"Yes."

"And wasn't you afeard?"

"Not much."

"Is New England in the United States?"

"Yes. That's the name we give to the six States in the northeastern corner of the Union."

"You don't say so! You got one name for six States! What States mought they be?"

"Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut."

"That's sorter like the Southern States, I s'pose. But I can't rightly tell how many of them they is. Mebby you could tell me."

"They are not quite as accurately fixed as the New England or the Middle States," said Eleanor; "but they are generally considered to be thirteen in number. Some persons make a fourteenth by including Kentucky, and some fifteen, by including Missouri."

"Was they all in the Confed'rit States?"

"No. Most of them were," answered Eleanor, "but it is hard to draw the line positively."

"Well, mebby you wouldn't mind tellin' of me which was."

"Well, Maryland is one of them. It was not in the Southern Confederacy. Virginia is one. It was in the Confederacy. West Virginia was formed during the war and I should say it was not in the Confederacy. North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi,

Louisiana, Texas, and Arkansas were Confederate States. Kentucky was not, I think, nor was Missouri. I am not sure about Tennessee."

"You've studied a heap o' g'ography, hain't you?"

"Oh, not so very much."

"I went to school three or four years when I was a gal; but I never had a good remembrance, an' I couldn't recollect what I larnt. I 'member somethin' 'bout Ameriky and Europe and Azhy an' Afriky—that's where the niggers come fum; but it's all mighty onsartin to me now. But we was in the Confed'rit States?"

"Yes."

"And thar was the battle of Gettysburg. My brother Robert was kilt thar. That wa'n't in our States, was it?"

"That was in Pennsylvania."

"To be sure. I recollect now as I hyeerd 'em say it was in Pennsylvany. That's mighty fur away, ain't it? Me and sister Jane has often talked of sendin' fer brother Robert's body; but they all told us it was too fur to bring him back home."

There were tears in the old woman's pale eyes, and her hands were clasped together.

"I tried to git somebody to go for him atter the war was over. And Mr. William Huntley give me ten dollars to pay the expenses. And Colonel Tomlinson give me five dollars. And Miss Margaret Mason give me ten dollars. But John Green what I sont thar never could find his grave."

"Then you did send for his body?"

"It was this a-way. John Green was a-goin'

thar to look for his brother and two or three more what was killed in the battle. An' 'scriptions was got up to pay for him travelin', and other things to git 'em home agin. He never brung back one of 'em."

"What a pity! But I suppose it was hard to find the graves."

"Mr. Huntley told me it wa'n't no use. He said, says he—an' I remember his very words, 'Your brother will sleep as well at Gettysburg as in Cherenden. You'd better use your little money for the livin', which it can do 'em some good; and not for the dead which it can't help.' Them was his words."

"And you know now that it would have been better to take his advice," said Eleanor.

"Yes, ma'am," returned Mrs. Harris. "But somehow I couldn't do it. Robert was the baby in the fam'ly—Robert Burroughs was his full name. He was nigh onto twenty year younger'n me. I was jist fifty-five years old a few days before the battle; an' he was only thirty-six goin' on thirty-seven. And I couldn't somehow rest satisfied with him killed and buried so far away from home. So I sent John Green for him; but the money was throwed away, as it turned out."

Eleanor did not answer and the two sat in silence for what seemed a long time.

About ten o'clock, when the multitude of the neighbors' dogs had ceased the barking, howling, and fighting which had made the earlier hours of the night painful, and when the vagrant negro had sung his last doleful strain and left the streets, Mrs. Harris signified her readiness to resume the

family history which had been interrupted. But the teacher suggested that the aged watcher needed rest, and that she had better lie down on the sofa standing against the inner wall of the room, across the room from the patient's bed. After a feeble protest, and on Eleanor's assurance that she would rouse her in case of need, and certainly on the Doctor's arrival, she acceded, and, allowing herself to be covered with a quilt taken from a closet in the room, stretched herself on the narrow couch, and was soon asleep.

Then the teacher sat by the lamp and read a book she had brought with her. And so the night went on—Mrs. Harris sleeping quietly on the sofa, Minnie resting on her bed, and the teacher reading, and at intervals visiting the child—till midnight. Then Dr. Thompson drove to the gate, and without knocking came into the room.

"All goes well, I assume from your reading so composedly," said he in a low voice.

"I think so," returned Eleanor.

He walked to the bed, took his seat in a chair there, and remained silent for several minutes. The child awoke, and muttered some words, but went to sleep again after he spoke gently to her. When he left her he stood with his arm resting on the mantelpiece, as if debating some serious question. Eleanor divined that the patient's symptoms were unfavorable, and therefore asked if there was anything to be done.

He picked up his hat and started out, saying, "I must go to the drug-store."

Eleanor offered to go in his place, insisting that he was fatigued, and that she was not afraid.

"You need not be afraid of anything except that infernal cur dog of Cogburn's between here and there. He'll jump the fence and tear your clothing. He bit at my horse as I drove here, and it took a pretty sharp cut of my whip to drive him away."

She had to admit that she did not care to encounter such a brute, and he went out at once and drove down the street. She heard furious barking about the time the sound of his horse and vehicle became indistinct, two blocks away.

About fifteen minutes later the same barking was renewed; and very soon she heard the report of a pistol and a great howling from a dog. Directly she heard the horse's feet and the rattle of the Doctor's loose wheels, and in two or three minutes he was again in the room.

"Where was that pistol fired?" asked she.

"I fired it," returned he coolly, taking up a wine-glass and a spoon.

"Were you attacked?"

"Y-es," answered he, dropping a fluid from a phial in his hand.

"Dear me!" cried she. "How was it?"

"Well," said he, never moving his eyes from the medicine, but continuing to pour it out drop by drop with a perfectly steady hand, "that—ah—that beast of a—dog that I—ten, eleven—told you about. Ah—fourteen—Cogburn's brute. I had to—er—er—fifteen—to kill him."

"You did?"

"Well, you see," said the Doctor, pausing while he poured water into the glass, and looking at her over his spectacles, "he came at me again and I

cut at him with my whip, but missed him. He followed me fifty or sixty yards, jumping and snapping at my horse, and two or three times at me. When I came back—" Here he paused to complete the pouring of the water, and to stir the mixture gently with a spoon.

"Well?"

"Well," resumed he, after holding the glass between his eyes and the lamp, and regarding it attentively—"Well, he got after me again, as I expected he would."

"It is unfortunate," suggested the teacher, "to be obliged to shoot dogs on the streets."

"Oh, well," returned the Doctor coolly, "men are shot so often now that we need not trouble ourselves about a vicious dog."

"But the firing of pistols on the streets, at this hour of the night?"

"Everybody is used to that. I find myself wondering what is the matter when I don't hear a pistol shot every hour or so."

"It indicates a fearful state of unrest, and of disorder," said Eleanor.

"To be sure," said the Doctor, handing her the glass. "Now give that to Minnie, if you can."

The effort was made; but the child did not respond.

"Pretty bad," muttered the old man. "Looks like collapse."

"Shall I call Mrs. Haxwell?"

"By no means," answered he positively. "That fool woman would make things ten times worse. We'll try stimulation. I've got what I want to use." And then he proceeded to draw bottles,

paper, cloth, surgical instruments and other things out of his great saddle-bags.

"Shall I rouse Mrs. Harris?" asked Eleanor.

"No; she hasn't much more sense than Nancy Haxwell."

He quickly handed her mustard and a cloth, bidding her prepare a poultice for each wrist and ankle, and one for the back of the neck, while he arranged to administer a hypodermic injection of brandy, talking all the time. These applications seemed to produce no effect for a time, and the teacher protested that the patient's mother ought to be called, suggesting the distressing consequences of the child dying in her absence.

"The devil!" cried the Doctor, clear out of temper. "I know what I'm about. Death is a familiar acquaintance of mine—a familiar foe; and I know that if I get myself hampered by those two stupid women, he'll beat me. I know something of your brain and nerve, and therefore trust you. Be patient. The child will show better pretty soon, I hope. Her system hasn't had time to respond to the treatment. I'll try the hypodermic application again."

Then he thrust the syringe into the child's shoulder, and was answered by a cry of pain. The rally followed quickly, to the extent of the little one opening her eyes and muttering a few words.

"Dawg! Dawg!" exclaimed Mrs. Harris, rising on the sofa, and rubbing her eyes. "What was that about a dawg?"

"You've been dreaming," cried the Doctor. "Somebody's dog got killed awhile ago, as I told Miss Field; and you've been turning it over in

your sleep, till you've got to dreaming of Cerberus and Anubis and everything else of the dog kind. Go to sleep."

The child improved slowly, so that when the old Doctor left at sunrise, she was in about as good condition as when Eleanor began her melancholy vigil.

CHAPTER XXVI

But the crisis was not past. The little sufferer remained fevered, prostrated, and restless all the following day. In her distress, Mrs. Haxwell begged that the teacher would remain with Minnie as long as she could. As the child declared that all she wished was to have "Miss Eleanor" with her, Eleanor stayed throughout the day, and agreed to remain until the next morning, though she was tired and despondent. In the afternoon she was joined by a lady of the name of Gibson,—a very thin and sallow old maid, with a good many affectations and a profusion of false curls and combs,—who announced that she was there for the night.

The air was sultry and close all day long, and at nightfall was more oppressive than ever. Large, white thunder-heads rose in the sky at noon, and continued to grow and pass, moved by a breeze which never touched the dry, hot earth. Scarcely a leaf of the oaks around the cottage rustled between sunrise and night; scarcely a sound was heard on the streets—there was everywhere a stillness, trying to the steadiest nerves, and to the worn and anxious stranger ominous of calamity. The physician came shortly before noon, and again toward sunset. He was very grave and gentle. When he went away the second time he scanned the teacher's face closely, and then said, "It is pretty hard on you. But you will last through the night; and, go the case

as it may, I think you will not be needed here after that." Which implied that the disease would reach its crisis during the night and the patient be dead or positively mending by the next morning. He added, "You know these little ones either go to pieces or recuperate very fast."

The little negress Polly slipped noiselessly into the room at dusk, and squatted on the floor in the corner near Minnie's bed. And there she sat almost motionless, but always watchful. Eleanor observed that she hastened to pick up and hand her her handkerchief two or three times when it dropped to the floor; and she also observed that Polly's great eyes were always wide open, the whites of them being very conspicuous in the gloom and in contrast with her very black face. Polly had been fond of "Miss Ellen," and fond of Minnie. After a bit, she told Polly that she had missed her the night before, and had inferred that she had left Mrs. Haxwell's service.

"No'm," answered Polly in a subdued tone. "My ma sont fer me yistiddy mornin', an' she didn't want me to come back ag'in till Minnie got well. But I come back anyhow."

"She was afraid you would catch the fever?"

"Yes'm. But I says to her, 'Ef I gwine to have de fever, I gwine to have it anyhow, 'cause me an' Minnie bin togedder till long atter she got it!' An' I says, 'Miss Ellen done gone dar; an' I mus' be 'longsides o' her an' Minnie.' So she let me come."

The night wore on drearily. The patient rarely spoke. Miss Gibson talked somewhat in the early

evening concerning good and bad families, and the former luxury of her life now quite gone in consequence of the war; but when the night came, she retired to a window, and seldom spoke or moved. About nine o'clock deep-voiced thunder began to sound in the distance, and sheets of lightning passed over the heavens. But for some time the air remained still and close and oppressively warm. Mrs. Haxwell came and went, always as noiselessly as was possible for her, but always with noise which agitated the child. The situation was most distressing. The child seemed to be dying, but without the physician no new treatment could be adopted.

After a while the lightning flashed more frequently and brilliantly, the thunder roared more loudly, and the wind arose, all betokening a terrible storm rapidly approaching. Just after a blaze of electricity which filled the room with dazzling light, and was succeeded almost instantly by a roar of thunder which shook the cottage to its foundation, the mother lost all self-control, and cried out,

"O my God! The Doctor will never, never come!"

Miss Gibson shivered and burst into tears. The child started, then lay still, moaning piteously.

"Do not be afraid," said the teacher, speaking as steadily as her own excitement allowed. "God is always with us, and never forgets us. He will send the Doctor before long."

Hardly were the words spoken when a heavy tread was heard in the piazza, and in a minute the old man walked in, breathing hard, and mopping

his bald, moist, shining head with his handkerchief.

He had barely outtraveled the storm. Almost at once it broke upon them with a terrific gale of wind, fierce lightning, loud thunder, and a deluge of rain.

Mrs. Haxwell, standing before the open fireplace, cried aloud. The Doctor rushed from the bedside toward her. But before he reached her the room was filled with a flood of glaring light, the thunder roared deafeningly, and the woman fell in a heap to the floor. The Doctor staggered somewhat from the shock, which affected all of them, but quickly laid hold on the motionless figure, and called to the two nurses.

"Miss Gibson, take Miss Field's place at the bed. Miss Field, come and help me."

Imitating his movements, the teacher caught Mrs. Haxwell by an arm. Then they raised her.

"We'll have her out in the rain—the only thing to be done," cried he. And then they half carried, half dragged the heavy, limp figure out of the room, through the passage, across the narrow portico in the rear, down the steps, and into the yard, where the wind blew furiously and the rain poured in torrents, amid a blaze of lightning and an unbroken roar of thunder.

"Fling her down!" shouted the Doctor, and they laid the insensible figure flat in the rain.

"Won't she be drowned?" cried the teacher, still holding the woman's arm.

"No, indeed!" bawled the old man. "It's the only thing for her. Fortunately there is plenty of

water. Don't bother yourself. Wait till she kicks or squalls."

And there they remained, the rain drenching their clothing, and the wind howling around them, while lightning flashed and thunder boomed. Before long the woman began to struggle, and then to mutter.

"Well, Nancy," said the Doctor, "I think you have about bath enough for this time. So, Miss Field, we'll drag her in, and let her dry off at her leisure."

Accordingly they lifted her and carried her to her bedroom, where the physician took a quilt from her bed, spread it on the floor, laid her on it, put a pillow under her head, and sent the teacher back to the child, saying that he would join her as soon as possible.

The child lay still, and Miss Gibson, with her head on the bed, sobbed hysterically. Polly squatted in her corner, silent and motionless, and winking her great eyes in stupefaction. Dr. Thompson entered pretty soon, breathing loudly and wringing the rain from his clothing. He only said, "Pretty hard work. But we've got rid of Nancy Haxwell for a while."

He then took off his wet coat, and addressed himself to a very careful and gentle examination of the little girl. After much effort they roused the child, and, assisted by the effort she made, succeeded in administering medicine. She seemed to feel pain, and cried feebly.

"It's burning her," said the Doctor, "and will nauseate her directly. Now you try to engage her

attention and occupy her mind while it is alive to surroundings."

Eleanor sat on the bed, raised the emaciated form, and held the drooping head against her bosom.

"Minnie," said she, "can you listen to me?"

"Oh, yes, Miss Field; but I feel so hot and sick."

"It is good medicine that Dr. Thompson has given you, and I hope it will make you well. Let us talk about something. I might tell you a story of a young lady and a little bird, if you would like."

Polly rose and stood near. "Dat's so," said she. "Minnie, don' you 'member how Miss Ellen used to tell us 'bout lions an' tigers an' rabbits and sich? Do please, Miss Ellen, tell us 'bout dat lady an' de little bu'd."

"Yes, please," murmured the child.

"Well," said the teacher, "once upon a time there was a young lady who lived pretty much by herself. Her mother and her sisters and her brothers lived far away; and she used to grow very lonely and sad, and often walked into the fields and forests, to see the beautiful flowers, and hear the birds sing. And there was one body of woods where she went so often that the birds got to know her; and they would not fly unless she came very, very near to them. And some of them would come pretty close to her feet, to eat the crumbs of bread she often threw them—"

"I boun' dem bu'ds love de booful lady what come an' feed 'em," said Polly.

"And sometimes, when she knew that nobody

was near, she would sing to the little birds. And they would stop their singing to listen to her, and would, when they grew to know her, come closer to her while she sang."

"I boun' she sing sweeter as any bu'd," remarked Polly, confidently.

"One day, when just at the edge of the forest, she heard the voice of a very young bird, which seemed to be calling for its mother. She did not go to it at once, for fear she would scare the little thing, but she stood awhile and waited. The bird's mother did not come to it, and did not answer its pitiful cry. There was a great, fierce hawk flying not far off, in circles, and screaming, and blue jays were chattering in a tree near by; but she knew that they would not help the little one, for it was not a baby jay. She feared, indeed, that the hawk and the jays would hurt the little thing."

"But I know she ain't gwine let dem hawk an' jay-bu'd hu't dat li'l' bu'd," cried Polly.

"No, indeed," said the teacher. "Coming closer to the bush where the little one was, the lady saw a nest, torn, and scattered on the ground; and then she saw the little sparrow that had been crying for its mother. It was too young to fly, if it had not been hurt; but she saw that its little wings had been torn, and were bleeding."

"Dem hawk an' jay-bu'd!" exclaimed Polly, indignantly. "I reckon dey done kilt dat little sparrer's ma, an' gwine to kill him too when dey git a chance."

"It was a little, little thing—not a great deal larger than the end of my thumb. Its breast had

soft down on it; its wings had very few feathers; and its little tail was scarcely half as long as one of your fingers."

She saw Polly measuring the length of one of her black digits; and Minnie also showed her interest by a similar movement of her thumb on the forefinger of the same wasted hand.

"So the lady said to the birdling, 'Dear little bird, what is the matter?' And the wee thing twittered, 'A great something came just now, while I was sleeping in the nest, and it screamed horribly. And then I and the nest were struck, and thrown on the ground.' 'And where did your mamma go?' asked the lady. 'I cannot tell,' answered the little bird, crying. 'She has never answered me.'"

"I jis' know," cried Polly, excitedly, "soon's Miss Ellen tell 'bout dat hawk screamin' an' jay-bu'd chatterin', dat dey done kill dat sparrer's ma an' hu't dat sparrer hisself!"

"Ah, Lord!" groaned the Doctor, wiping his shining head.

The teacher repressed Polly's ardor by laying a finger on her own lips, and resumed. "Then the lady lifted up the little sparrow as carefully and gently as she could. And she wiped off with her handkerchief the blood on its breast, and took some moss from the nest, and made a sort of bed for the little thing to lie on. One of the middle bones of one wing was broken."

Minnie shivered; Polly stared.

"But," continued Eleanor, "that lady knew what to do; and so she told the little bird to be

patient and bear pain as well as it could, until she could lay it in the nest."

"I know she ain' gwine hu't dat sparrer," said Polly, decisively; "an' sparrer gwine know it putty soon, too!"

"Did it hurt the little bird much?" asked Minnie.

"Oh, yes; but at last the lady had the birdling in the old nest. And then she took nest and bird on her arm, close to her heart, and went back toward her home. But the way was long and rough, and the little bird was feverish and sick. And more than once he complained, saying, 'Leave me here to die.' But the lady said, 'God cares for little sparrows, as He does for all His creatures. And the Saviour of the world has told us that He feeds the fowls of the air and clothes the lilies of the field. And He says that our Heavenly Father knows even when one little sparrow falls to the ground, as you fell, birdie, just now.' And the sparrowkin was comforted for a time; but after a while it complained again, and prayed to be left on the ground to die. But the lady told it that if it would only be patient, till she could take it to her home, she would bandage the wounded limb, to keep it steady, and put cool water on it, to keep down the fever and pain. The bird was quiet for a few minutes. But as they went on through the sun, it grew sorer and sicker and hotter, and chirruped fretfully to the lady, saying, 'Something beats and knocks against me as you hold me in your arms, and gives me, oh, so much misery!' And the lady answered, 'That is my heart, throbbing from rapid walking and the heat of the sun;

but you must know that it is also throbbing for you.' And then the birdie felt sorry for complaining, and nestled his head against the lady's bosom, and was quiet."

"The birdie ought to have known better," murmured Minnie.

"You nuvver min', Minnie," said Polly, consolingly. "I boun' dat boo'ful lady bring 'em all right."

"So," resumed the teacher, "they went on. And when they reached the lady's home, she took soft linen, and bound it around and around the broken wing, and poured cold, fresh water on the cloths and gave the birdie a few drops to drink, and persuaded him to eat a few crumbs of bread. The birdie did not want to eat; but when the lady told him it would be good for him, he took what she gave him. Then she put the birdie into a little basket, filled with soft, white cotton, and told him to sleep. And when the birdie couldn't sleep, the lady set the basket in the window, and sat down by it, and sang such a sweet song that the birdie was soon asleep and resting."

"I know dat song jis' like what Miss Ellen sing to me an' you, Minnie, when we come a-playin' under her winder," cried Polly.

"Oh, yes," said the child, "the song she sang that last day she was here!"

"God bless us! God bless us!" murmured the Doctor, as he retired into the shadow of the chimney, and cleared his throat softly.

"Amen!" sighed Miss Gibson; and then she laid her head—curls, combs, bows, hairpins, all—

on the window-sill, and indulged herself in what women call "a good cry."

But the child was not asleep, and Polly was not satisfied.

"What come o' dat bu'd?" asked the latter.

"The lady kept it till it got well," answered the teacher. "She had to keep it for several weeks. But finally the birdie could not only hop around on the floor of the room, but could move the broken wing, and flutter from one chair to another."

"I hope he t'ank de lady," suggested Polly.

"Oh, yes. He said to her, very often, 'Cheep, cheep! to-wee!' And while she sat at her table and read, birdie would scramble on top of the table and twitter to her. But, one day, when the sparrow's wings seemed to be strong, the lady carried him to the open window, and said to him, 'Little bird, you would rather fly out into the air, and go and talk with the other sparrows, than stay here. Go then!' And she put him on her finger; and after saying 'cheep' to her, birdie rose and flew away to the rosebush near by, where there were three or four other sparrows chirping."

"Oh, the mean thing," sighed Minnie, "to go away and leave his good friend!"

"Nuvver you min', Minnie," cried Polly positively. "I lay dat bu'd ain' gwine go 'way fer good fum de boo'ful lady!"

"And did he stay away?" murmured Minnie.

"I can't say," replied the teacher. "But after a while three or four sparrows lit on the rosebush, right against the window, and all of them

chattered to the lady while she stood at the window and talked to them."

"Minnie," cried Polly, triumphantly, "Minnie, ain't I done tole you dat little bu'd ain' gwine fer fum de boo'ful lady!"

"And did the sweet lady sing to them?" asked the child.

"Yes, the lady sang?"

"What song was it?" murmured the child, drowsily.

"The same one she sang to the crippled birdling." And then she sang, in a low, clear voice, Tennyson's baby-song—"What does little Birdie say?"

The little eyes closed, the little hands relaxed their clasp; and before the song ceased Minnie was sleeping peacefully.

The Doctor now came forward and touched—very lightly—the brow and hands of the child. Then he beckoned to the teacher to follow him.

As soon as they reached the front piazza he grasped her hand excitedly, and exclaimed:

"By George, we've won the fight!"

"Thank God!" said she.

"And thank you, as God's instrument!" cried he. "You've done what all the doctors in the world couldn't have done! God bless you, my dear! It does an old man's heart good to see and hear such a woman. It's a d—d outrage that you have not been appreciated in this community. But you've got a friend in old Ike Thompson; and if you ever want any help, come to him!"

"You are very, very kind," murmured Eleanor, weeping for joy.

“Kind! My Lord! I’m only saying less than the tenth part of what I feel!” roared he.

And the rising sun, when he looked into the chamber of sickness, saw Minnie with a new color on her cheeks and a new light in her eyes, and shone on a group of watchers rejoicing that the reaper Death had passed by.

CHAPTER XXVII

On Saturday morning Colonel Tomlinson came, in all his grandeur to see the teacher. He was clothed in spotless broadcloth and stainless linen; his rosy face was shaven clean and sleek; his long white locks were combed behind his ears in graceful, patriarchal regularity; and his poses and speeches were full of dignity. Fortunately for the stranger's nerves, their interview was brief. After referring to the death of three children in the village, and expressing commiseration with their families, and confessing the inability of the trustees to determine how long the epidemic of scarlet fever would continue to afflict the community, he informed her that he had come, as chairman of the board, to announce to her that the exercises of the school would be suspended for another week.

When she started to express her regret, he anticipated any embarrassment purely personal to herself by saying that the trouble being one which she neither had caused nor could control, her salary would not be affected by the enforced vacation. And he was so good as to add that it was known to him and to others that she had voluntarily subjected herself to the infection, and had rendered a great service in, according to Dr. Thompson's account, saving the life of a "certain" child.

Then he waved to her with his large hand, and, bowing profoundly took his departure.

On the Monday two weeks after the suspension of the school, exercises were resumed, with an attendance of thirty-one scholars. Laura Cogburn was not there, but Charley Tomlinson was, as fresh and full of himself as ever. The Lubecks returned—as disagreeable and silly as ever. Jake Haxwell came back from the country, and to school; and little Minnie, very pale and nervous and unequal to any study, would come for a short time each day. And the Jernigan family sent a very slim, yellow boy, named Thomas, the nephew and namesake of Mr. Tom Jernigan. It appeared afterward that the mention of Eleanor Field as “a mighty smart young woman fum the Nawth” by Thomas and his sister Sarah Ann had led the lad’s father, who lived twelve miles away in the country, to send him to board with his grandparents, and go to school.

And the resumption of the school was speedily followed by another turn of good fortune for the teacher. The Federal authorities decided to discontinue political arrests, and to enlarge on bail the many prisoners in the county jail. It is true that every one of them was bound over to answer to indictments in the Federal Court, for the crime of Ku Kluxing; but almost any sort of bail was accepted, and the captives returned to their homes amid general rejoicing among the white population.

It was now full summer in the South—the period of the sun’s absolute domination. Day after day that fiery autocrat blazed for more than fourteen hours in unclouded brilliance, and night after night the tired earth, without a wave of

cooling air to refresh her, lay palpitating through the few hours of darkness, awaiting the coming of her lord.

Rarely during the day did clouds venture to interpose between the sun's fiery face and the shrinking subjects beneath it; and when they did, they often opened their dark, tumultuous ranks, as if to show to a sweltering and fearful world him who employed them as the ministers of his power.

Sometimes, great masses of wreathing, rolling vapor gathered in the west as he made ready for his departure—vapor gradually hardening into such solidity that its outlines stood clear-cut and sharp against the sky; but even those gigantic forms, booming with deep thunder, and blazing with lightning, took their strong, varied colors from their king, and waited for his going. Then they burst upon an enfeebled and weary world, and rocked and tore and affrighted it with roar and crash of vivid flame, adding, every moment, sound to sound and brightness to brightness and tempest breath to tempest breath, till there seemed to be a universal blaze and thunder of fury.

Most times, however, the night was clear and still; no cloud obscured the pale moon or passed before the stars, or reflected a single ray, no breeze stirred the air or moved a leaf or flower. And then the silence became more impressive than all the sounds of day or of evening tornado.

After this, after the midnight, there was a change which no man has made comprehensible to us, and which only those who, led to the contemplation of a Southern night in summer by

sickness, or a restless mind, have experienced and considered—a change from absolute noiselessness to one great, sad sigh. The hearing of this breathing of material nature may have suggested to the ancient Greek, in his clear, dry atmosphere, that soft melody which most of us think expressed as the music of the spheres, and which, catching it as fully as one in the grosser air of England could well do, the great master of expression has described as a choiring of harmonies by the stars; but to us who have often listened to the melancholy monotone no such suggestion is at all admissible. The music of the spheres, alas, is not sound. Yet every sensitive watcher between midnight and dawn, in Southern lands, where no wind blows, and no moan or other sound reaches, can testify that, in those still, solemn hours, there arises a voice of profoundest melancholy.

That voice, borne on no breath of air, the solitary stranger heard, many and many a time, when, roused from a brief repose by disturbing dreams or by her incapacity for rest, she left her bed to catch a cooling draft of air and watch the stars. One alone of these gave either encouragement to the observer or token of its own vivacity—the morning star, glittering in full splendor in the cloudless east, fresh and hopeful, though soon to be quenched in the overpowering effulgence of sunlight.

And to her many a night was—first sultry heat and silence, then the sigh of nature breathing through a pulseless air, then the brief cheering radiance of one planet, then a burst of bird-harmony, then the return of blazing light and sun-rule.

It was hard for one unaccustomed to such a climate to prosecute any employment with energy and constancy. For her there was absolutely no period of repose or recuperation. Sunrise often found her even more weary than sunset left her. She soon learned to account for the lack of celerity and industry in Southern lands; and indeed, she soon began to wonder—utterly unacclimated as she was—how they could in summer time exercise any energy either of body or of mind.

Much tardiness and languor characterized the study and action of the pupils, and it was difficult to secure the attention of most of them, even when the teacher attempted to assist them in their work. But suffering herself under the same or greater lassitude, she made large allowance for them, and thus preserved her own composure and their good will.

CHAPTER XXVIII

On Thursday morning, the 20th day of June, just as the teacher adjusted her hat, preparatory to going to school, Cindy, the maid of all work, who had succeeded old Nancy, announced that a "young boy" desired to see her. He proved to be Thomas Jernigan, Jr., one of the new scholars. Thomas, after taking off his hat at the door, handed Eleanor Field a sheet of writing-paper, very much crumpled and not a little soiled. Opening it she read:

"The plezure of your company is requested to a party at Mr. Hiram Jernigan's on Friday the 21 instance at 8 o'clock p. m. in the evening."

To this writing was appended a long list of male and female names, some crossed out, some marked with a cross-mark, some unmarked.

"Well, Thomas," said Eleanor, not quite understanding the paper, "what am I to do?"

"Ain't you seen your name thar in that lis'?" asked Thomas.

"Oh!" said she, "I'll read further. Yes, here it is."

"I thought it was thar," observed Thomas, with satisfaction. "Well, you jist put a cross-mark at it, so's to show you've been invited to the party. Some uv 'em's scratched out entirely—them what Aunt Sar' Ann didn't want to be axed. But them as is axed is to put a mark at *ther* names."

The teacher marked her name—"Miss Eleanor

Field" it stood—and returned the paper to Thomas, who at once took his leave.

Here was an invitation to an entertainment—a very large one—and the stranger was at a loss what to do. However, the first name was Margaret Mason's, and she would instruct the teacher. No reply was expected or desired; and there was an abundance of time to hear from Oak Hall.

That afternoon Margaret Mason stopped at Squire Williams's. She insisted that the teacher should not only attend the party, but also accompany her to Oak Hall, the next afternoon, go to the party with her, and afterward spend the night and the next day or two with her.

On going away, she said, laughing, "I shall call for you at four o'clock to-morrow afternoon, so as to give you time for learning about such a party as the Jernigans get up. Have your party-things ready to carry with you, as you will dress at our house. It is to be quite an affair. More than a hundred guests have been 'axed,' and we are to be there promptly at the hour."

It was not without serious misgivings that the teacher undertook to appear on such a scene; but she could not stay away without giving offense, and she felt comparatively safe in the company of Margaret Mason. The details of her toilet need not be set forth. It may be mentioned, however, that Margaret dressed herself plainly and wore no jewelry except a large solitaire diamond brooch at the throat of her high-necked gown. She compelled the teacher to lay aside her evening-gowns, saying that it would excite too much talk for any one—especially a stranger

—to go *decollete*. She also had Eleanor leave off bracelets, brooches, and all ornaments for the hair, and wear, in the way of jewelry, only an old necklace of gold beads. "Never mind," said Margaret, "that will look exceedingly fine to that crowd, and it will give heart to a dozen girls who will wear necklaces of all colors, sizes and materials."

Then there was a discussion concerning gloves. Eleanor insisted on white kid. Margaret doubted if any at all would be tolerated. Finally they compromised by adopting pale lilac kid gloves for both.

Eight o'clock meant eight o'clock in that neighborhood, and a large crowd had already gathered when the Mason carriage arrived. They were met at the door by Mr. Thomas Jernigan—all smiles and arrayed in black frock-coat, white Marseilles vest, a high black stock, and black trousers. His hair was parted just over his right ear, and stood up in an enormous mass on the summit of his cranium, so that from the soles of his heavy shoes to the crest of his hair he stood full six feet four inches. He was "powerful glad" to see them, and bawled loudly for "Sar' Ann." The latter answered the call in haste—arrayed in the identical purple gown Eleanor had helped to complete, without gloves, but with a luxuriant floral display on her head and full bosom, with earrings of vast size, a necklace of beads showing all the colors, a brooch of great dimensions, and bracelets of uncertain color and design. She was very happy; and her large, round, brown eyes, her full, rosy cheeks, and her voluptuous lips parted in a smile which displayed teeth of brilliant

whiteness and perfect shape, made her little less than beautiful.

She also was "powerful" glad—so glad that she had to give both Margaret and the teacher a resounding kiss.

When they entered the "parlor" as the drawing-room is commonly called in the South, they saw two rows of chairs ranged along all the four walls. In the rear rank were seated some old women and middle-aged women, with here and there a young girl; in the front rank were the younger women. While they paused to get their bearings Eleanor observed, seated in the front rank, seven or eight maidens in a row, ranging apparently from twelve to fifteen years of age, all in white muslin, with little or no jewelry, all with roses in their hair and at their throats, all in short dresses, wearing black boots and no gloves. She recognized two of her pupils among them. Their eyes were bright, their cheeks rosy, and their manner demonstrative of happy excitement. She thought them quite pretty and graceful, as they chattered and giggled with one another. She also observed that their hands were small and white, and that their feet were delicate and slender and arched. Her two pupils bowed and smiled to her—which was very nice of them.

While they paused, and Margaret exchanged a few words with the bystanders, Eleanor noticed that the maidens just mentioned fixed their eyes on the crowd at the door, and then tittered and nudged one another. Looking round for the cause, she saw Marcus Aurelius Vaughn burst through the throng and glide across the open

floor. He was in full evening dress, and his long, curling hair floated like a golden cloud over his shoulders as he rapidly sped, with alternate full and short steps, toward the smiling girls. He exclaimed as he went, "Ah me!" "Sweet creatures!" "Dear, oh dear!" and then went to shaking their hands with both of his, as they rose to meet him. There was next a clamor of the young tongues. "Oh, Mr. Vaughn!" "Mr. Vaughn, you are perfectly beautiful!" "I knew you'd be here!" "Where did you get that sweet rose?" "Mr. Vaughn, won't you cut the pigeon-wing to-night?"

Marcus Aurelius was supremely happy, and he bowed, kissed his hand, made all sorts of gestures, and smiled on all, crying out such things as, "Dear me!" "Sweet creatures!" "Charming lasses!" "To be sure!" "Oh, my!" "What a delight!" And then he shook hands with everybody in reach, stumbling over the front rank to grasp the hand of the older ladies in the rear, till finally, getting his center of gravity on the farther side of a chair, he had to be lifted to the perpendicular and placed on his feet by a raw-boned, tall woman who, though laughing heartily, gave him a punch to make sure of his not falling over her again. But Mr. Vaughn was not a bit disconcerted. He chattered, and bowed, and pushed about among the girls who surrounded him—perfectly happy.

But after a while there was a suspension of conversation and laughter, even in Mr. Vaughn's vicinity, and all eyes were directed to the door. Directly there emerged from the group there assembled the stately form of Colonel Tomlinson,

with his wife. The Colonel stalked toward the center of the room, his little companion clinging to his arm. There they were met by several of the older persons of the company, to whom the small lady spoke gently, and on whom her husband bestowed oritund speeches and large waves of the hand. The Colonel was in regulation evening costume, and his wife, clad in simple black, looked meek and sad. Margaret caught the lady's eye, and presented Eleanor to her with the quiet yet positive emphasis which no man or woman could misunderstand. Mrs. Tomlinson fluttered somewhat, and showed signs of nervousness; but she was so gentle, and had such a tone of deprecation, that the stranger was quite ready to meet her halfway in her evident proposal to be friendly. Yet Eleanor could not escape reflection. "How many good women have been shut off from me here by the ostracism of all Northerners!"

Soon there was another commotion and there strode into the room a dark, tall, broad-shouldered man, with long, waving black hair, that fell over his collar, and an enormous mustache. He was in evening dress, and his well-fitting garments displayed to great advantage the symmetry of his fine figure. He was greeted cordially by Colonel and Mrs. Tomlinson, to whom he responded in a clear, ringing voice and a very positive utterance. At first the crowd seemed to stop and admire him; and then some of the older men and women advanced to him, and shook hands with him. He was a beautiful figure—only he was *so* self-conscious.

"I have seen that gentleman before," whispered the teacher to Margaret Mason. "Who is he?"

"That is Colonel Jenkins," returned her friend, with a smile—"Colonel Samuel Jenkins, formerly of the Confederate Cavalry."

The teacher at once recalled the bloody narrative of adventures she had heard at the hotel table on the day of her arrival in Cherenden.

The Colonel soon perceived Miss Mason, and at once came to her, with much show. Margaret shook hands with him, and after exchanging a few words in a low tone turned to Eleanor.

"Miss Field," said she, "allow me to present to you my friend Colonel Jenkins."

The Colonel bowed gravely and gloomily; but he proceeded to speak courteously and considerately concerning the weather and the occasion. Margaret did not abandon her friend to him, but took part in the conversation, keeping a hand on one of the teacher's arms all the time. The teacher knew what that meant; and, apparently, Colonel Jenkins knew, too.

While the Colonel pulled his thick, pendant and raven-black mustache, and ventilated his persiflage, there was again a silence and a turning of eyes to the door. Then the stranger saw William Huntley, tall, erect, and unaffected, entering the room. He was, of course, in regulation costume—only his vest was high and close, and he wore nothing but black, except white kid gloves. And the contrast in color suggested to Eleanor the unusual smallness of his hands—hands which seemed ill suited to pulling down the wildest horses and striking down huge men.

There was no appearance of unfriendliness on his face, and he returned greetings with kindly words and smiles; she saw one of the young girls blush with pleasure when he took her hand and spoke to her. But he did not stay longer than a few seconds with any one, until he seemed to recognize an aged lady in the rear rank. To her he went at once, and when she rose to meet him he took her hand and held it long in his, speaking to her gravely. Eleanor saw his companion put her handkerchief to her eyes, after a little while; but she removed it before he left her.

Then Margaret said to her, "You see William talking to that wan, delicate woman over there? Do you remember with what solemnity he placed a garland on a soldier's tomb on Memorial Day? That lady is the mother of his dead soldier-friend. The young girl whose hand he took, just before he discovered the older lady, is the orphan niece of his friend."

Huntley came to them pretty soon. He spoke to Eleanor first, and, for the first time, offered his hand to her. He said that he was glad to see them there; that he should now be sure of having two persons who would listen, "after a fashion," to his commentaries on "things present." Eleanor laughed.

"You understand, I see," said he, smiling. "And your apprehension of my meaning assures me that I shall be able to impart to you some information."

"How are you, Huntley?" cried Colonel Jenkins, extending his hand.

"Well, thank you, Jenkins," returned Huntley,

touching the tips of his fingers. "I hope you are 'enjoying the same blessing.'"

"I was never better," said the Colonel, "and never in finer condition to enjoy social festivities."

"Notwithstanding the warm weather?"

"Well, it is fearfully hot and close here," said the Colonel, wiping his warm face with a highly scented handkerchief.

"There is a cooler atmosphere in the front piazza," remarked Huntley, gravely; "but the fumes of pipes out there render it rather difficult to breathe. So I suppose we shall have to endure this until some diversion is made. Perhaps there will be dancing. I heard the tuning of violins as I came in. If they dance in the hall it will relieve the pressure here. How about it, Jenkins?"

"I'm glad you suggested it," cried the Colonel. "I'll look after it."

When the dancing was announced, Colonel Tomlinson asked Margaret to dance. She declined, saying that she had decided to save herself for the Virginia reel, at the close.

Colonel Jenkins, returning in haste, took possession of a sixteen-year-old girl, who seemed highly flattered. No one invited the teacher.

Huntley, still standing before her, said, "We shall now be able to get to a window and enjoy fresh air."

He was right. The room was quickly emptied, except for a few old ladies who remained against the walls, Margaret Mason who carried Mrs. Tomlinson to a window, Mr. Hiram Jernigan who took a seat with three old farmers at the fire-

place, where the four sat, talked, and spit tobacco over the hearth, and Eleanor and William Huntley, who moved to the nearest window.

"Don't mind me," said Huntley. "This is a new spectacle for you,—a large 'frolic' in the country,—and I think you ought to indulge your inclination to study it."

"You will explain anything I may not understand?" asked Eleanor.

"With pleasure. That was my purpose in remaining here by you."

Amid the din in the hall there suddenly rose the sound of two violins and a triangle in lively music.

"Perhaps I had best name the pieces as they play them," said Huntley.

"Please do," said Eleanor, rather taken with the melody.

"That's 'Billy in the Low-grounds.'"

"Forward four!" cried the leader of the music. "Back to places!" "Ladies forward!" "Gents forward!" "Hands round!" "Back to places!" "Ladies change!" "Right in left, and back to places!" "Sides forward!"—And to the fiddling and triangle-jingle, in a lively time, went calls and pattering feet.

There was an electric current that came from the merry music, the stamp of feet dancing in time, and the ripple of joyful voices that floated in from the hall; so that Eleanor sat silent, listening, and observing the heads that appeared in the hall above the shoulders of those who stood in the door and looked. Huntley rested one of

his arms on the window-sill, and looked out into the darkness, saying not a word.

Presently the tune was changed; and then she heard a voice singing the air, and she distinguished the words, "Don't mind how you shear 'em, so you shear 'em, so you shear 'em!"

"What is that, please?" cried Eleanor.

"Oh!" returned Huntley, laughing, "that is our favorite dance-song 'Shear 'em'; and Tony Simkins, the darky leader of the orchestra, is giving us the benefit of his voice. Hear the chorus of our country boys!"

And sure enough, twenty or thirty young male voices joined in the refrain, "So you shear 'em—so you shear 'em!"

"Fust lady to the right!" shouted the voice that had led in "Shear 'em"—"*and coquette!*"

Then followed the fiddles and the triangle and the song, with occasional bursts of laughter.

"Why do they laugh?" asked Eleanor.

"The young lady makes as if she would turn the gentleman she goes to, but after leading him to extend his hands to her, goes back to her partner, or another, and leaves the gentleman alone, looking silly. Mr. Vaughn is usually the victim in such cases, but sometimes Jenkins suffers a disappointment."

Then came a brief cessation of music. After that, when it commenced again, the same voice led, in the words, "Jump on de ham-bone; bite off de 'en. Oh, Mars John, don't you do dat again!"

"What on earth is that?" cried the teacher.

Huntley laughed. "Oh," said he, "that is only

another favorite dance-air, 'Ham-bone.' Tony, as you perceive, is leading the vocalization of his music."

And sure enough, a number of male voices joined in the chorus, "Oh, Mars John, don't you do dat again."

"It is very silly, no doubt," said Eleanor, laughing; "but really I feel quite excited by this performance."

"I have no doubt," returned Huntley. "It is a curious kind of thing. If it suits you, we will look at the next cotillion. You will see a good many things to interest you. I did not suggest your seeing this one, because—well, it is rather hard to express the idea—but—but I thought it would be a new thing to you; and you might—"

"You need not go further," said she, laughing. "You thought I might be surprised into doing or saying something that—"

"You need not go further," interrupted he, amused. "We understand each other. But you will be prepared to witness the next one."

The fiddles played "Come, haste to the wedding," which the *chef* sang while ordering "all hands round"; and the dance was concluded amid a loud stamping of feet and multitudinous exclamations of merriment.

Many of the dancers and of the lookers-on now poured back into the parlor—all of them wearing smiles and heightened color, and most of them perspiring profusely. Mr. Vaughn was among the foremost, talking with animation, mopping his face, and throwing back his long hair.

He pirouetted to Eleanor, crying, "Dear young

lady! I have searched the house 'from turret to foundation-stone' for you; and here I find you—no doubt discussing philosophy with the granite-man, Huntley! William, dear boy, how goes it with you?"

"Don't expend your force in this way, Mark," said Huntley. "Both Miss Field and I saw you among the dancers—fluttering, fidgetting, and, if I may continue the alliteration, fooling, with all your might."

"Well," returned Mr. Vaughn in a whisper, "we have to do that sort of thing with the sweet, sweet young maidens. But I never for a moment forgot our dear lady here. And if the fair Northern flower will deign to walk through the next quadrille with me, I shall be most happy—unless you have her engaged."

"I am not in your way," said Huntley. "I do not dance, as I think you know."

The teacher could not refuse Mr. Vaughn's invitation, and in a few minutes, when Mr. Tom Jernigan called to the "gentlemen" to lead out their "pardners," she went with him into the hall, and engaged in a quadrille, to the tune of "Oh, Miss Nancy, don't you cry!" and similar strains. Then it was "Forward two!" "Ladies change!" "Fours right *in* left!" "Swing corners!" "Sachez all!" "Balance all!" "Hands roun'!" etc., etc.,—while the fiddles squealed, the triangle jingled, Tony sang, feet stamped, men guffawed, girls giggled, and old and young kept time. Mr. Vaughn glided and tipped on his toes, Colonel Jenkins marched and strutted and pulled his mustache, "Sar' Ann" bobbed and bounced, the sixteen-

year-olds tripped and whirled, Charley Tomlinson rattled his heels and lifted the girls off the floor when he turned them, old Colonel Tomlinson swayed and patronized people, Miss Gibson minced and sidled, Mrs. Lubeck jolted and tumbled around—all the dancers, twenty-four in number, entered into the movement in their several fashions. And so it went on for half an hour.

Marcus Aurelius Vaughn was the most conspicuous figure of all. He was always dancing, performing many strange steps when his side were properly in motion, and at other times rattling his heels or turning on his toes. He was particularly amusing when it came his turn, in "First gentleman to the right, and coquette!" He was apparently dismayed when he found that, instead of being allowed to choose whether he would "coquette" others, he was "coquetted" himself. At first, when he offered to turn a lady, but found her turning her own partner instead, he would stop and sigh, "Cruel creature!" or "Unkind, unkind!" but after a few disappointments he abandoned all hope of the ladies he danced to, and went to executing the most astonishing *pas seuls* in the middle of the square; and finally he refused to face the ladies at all, but "sached" with his back to them, and, with strange steps, turned imaginary partners in and around the center of the open space. Old and young grew hilarious over his antics.

There was one pretty occurrence in this dance. When in "Ladies to the right, and coquette!" Eleanor's pupil, Jennie Lane, a fifteen-year old brunette, was going the round, Jennie "co-

quetted" Colonel Jenkins and misled three or four others to whom she half offered her hands, and tripped across to the teacher, and putting her arms around her, turned very deftly and gracefully, saying softly, as she did so, "You are the handsomest and sweetest of all!" Everybody applauded, and Colonel Jenkins cried, "By George! that is the most beautiful thing I ever witnessed."

The teacher was almost overcome by this demonstration of affection; but Mr. Vaughn restored her composure by exclaiming, "I'm going to marry that Jennie Lane as soon as she completes her education!"

Of course, when Eleanor's tour of travel around the square came she did not "coquette" any of the gentlemen; and of course no one of them "coquetted" her. On the contrary, every man to whom she danced responded in his best style, and caught her hand and turned her cordially. When she reached Jennie Lane's partner, in order to show her appreciation of the girl's kind feeling, she offered one hand to Jennie and the other to Jennie's partner. He saw her meaning at once, and bowed and smiled as the three, amid a general clapping of hands, turned in the figure.

"By George!" she heard Colonel Jenkins say, "there never were two handsomer things done in the same evening, since the world began!"

Soon after the quadrille came supper, in the large dining-room in a wing or "ell" of the main dwelling. Here was a grand spread—ham, beef, mutton, roast pig, chickens, ducks, guinea fowls, hash, eggs cooked in several ways, bread, rice, hominy, cakes, ice cream, syllabub, pies, tarts,

apple float, custards, "store candy," and some confections quite new to the teacher—and more or less inviting. Some of the men were rather boisterous in their speech, and not very thoughtful of the comfort of others in their rush to procure food for their "pardners," as they generally called the ladies they escorted. But every one seemed to be in a good humor; and even Colonel Tomlinson, Huntley, and homicidal Colonel Jenkins suffered rough jostling and rougher joking with equanimity. A very old, short, fat woman, who carried a long staff, and spoke in a loud voice, commanded Colonel Tomlinson to get her "some supper," and he obeyed. Mr. Vaughn looked, more or less, after everybody, flitting incessantly from one point to another, addressing any one in his shrill voice, and receiving all sorts of remarks with serenity and cheerfulness. Once only he returned a sharp answer. That was to a young man who observed to him, "It 'pears like you can't git about like you used to; must be gitt'n' old." He retorted, so as to be heard at some distance, "It's your eyes that are at fault, Jim Tuggle, owing to the inferior quality of the whiskey you brought with you to-night." To Eleanor's surprise, the man laughed heartily, and said, "Pretty good for you, Mark Vaughn!"

And after supper they had the "Old Virginia Reel," in which thirty or more persons joined with energy. And then, about one o'clock, the guests departed, almost in a body, as if all understood the reel to be the termination of the entertainment. Eleanor rode home with Margaret,

hearing all the way, the whoops of the exhilarated horsemen, their loud laughter, and their more or less successful efforts to sing "Dixie," "The Bonnie Blue Flag," "The Yellow Rose of Texas," and snatches of some other music. One young man, with a very thick tongue, was heard at intervals droning the sad, dreary old song "Lorena."

While Margaret and Eleanor stood at the door of Oak Hall awaiting admittance at the hands of drowsy Jane, the singer last mentioned rode alone and slowly past the gate, still laboring with his song. He uttered with some distinctness the words, "But there's a future, oh, thank God!"

"So there is, Mr. Ned Wilson," said Margaret. "But you need not feel particularly thankful, for it will bring you a terrible headache to-morrow morning."

CHAPTER XXIX

The teacher spent the next day at Oak Hall, and rode out with Margaret in the afternoon. The highway was thronged with negroes as they went and as they returned. "All those people go to town on Saturday," Margaret said. And they were heard till midnight, on their way to their homes in the country, singing, whooping, laughing and talking, at the top of their voices. In the evening Mr. Vaughn, Colonel Jenkins and Huntley came, and played whist and cribbage with them. The Colonel, who had spent the night before and the day with Huntley, was in high spirits. He spoke enthusiastically of the "party," and of the wine and cold mutton he had enjoyed after it at Huntley's. He also talked much, and pretty well, about horses, though evidently irritating Huntley by his comparison of Delta with his own steed "Jeb Stuart," to the disparagement of the former. He also ridiculed "Bucephalus," Mr. Vaughn's saddle-horse. But that gentleman only answered, "He suits me very well, Samuel," and paid no further attention to the boaster. Otherwise, the Colonel was quite agreeable, notwithstanding his vanity. He never once referred to the war or to politics; and he spoke with fine feeling of his four maiden sisters when Mrs. Mason and Margaret inquired about them—"the girls," as he called them. Mr. Vaughn played cards only while Mrs. Mason remained in the room talking to Huntley. When she retired he

gave his hand to the latter, and thenceforward chattered, wandered about the room, hummed tunes, practised dance steps, looked at books and pictures, and was as contented as a well-reared child engaged in such employment.

The next day, Sunday, the Episcopalians had service in the Methodist church. There was a pretty good organ there. Margaret and Eleanor, expecting to lead the music, had practised some chants and hymns the night before. One Mr. Boller, a merchant in Cherenden, came to sing bass. Mr. Vaughn was expected to sing tenor; Jennie Lane, contralto; Eleanor, soprano, and Margaret Mason to play, and sing wherever and whenever most needed.

There was a large congregation, among whom were Colonel Tomlinson and his family, the Andersons, the Lubecks and the Cogburns. Mrs. Haxwell came, bringing with her the awkward Jake and pale little Minnie. Eleanor signaled to the child to come to her; and pretty soon Minnie was sitting close beside her in the choir.

William Huntley and Colonel Jenkins came in together, and sat together—the latter being quite grand in his waxed mustache, his fluffed hair, and his broad-shouldered frock.

Finally, Marcus Aurelius Vaughn teetered in, tipping along on his toes, rapidly and lightly, arrayed in white linen, and followed by a very black boy similarly clad.

"Who are these?" whispered Eleanor to Margaret.

"Mr. Vaughn and Toodles," answered the other, uttering a sound like that of one choking.

"What is Toodles?" inquired Eleanor, while Jennie Lane grasped her arm in an agony of amusement.

"Toodles is the negro boy who attends Mr. Vaughn," replied Margaret. "You remember the boy who was looking after Mr. Vaughn when he was arrested."

"But how transformed!" exclaimed Eleanor.

"Well," whispered Margaret, "Toodles and his 'boss' are capable of infinite transformations—as you will learn when you come to know them well."

Mr. Vaughn and Toodles now reached them; and while the master fluttered and chattered, his companion stood silent and staring. Directly Margaret said to the boy:

"I am glad to see you, Toodles. You've come here to help us, haven't you?"

"Yes, Miss Marg'ret," answered he. "I'm hyer to blow up de awgin."

"Very well," returned she gravely. "You know how to handle the pump, and you'll do your duty. I can count on you, Toodles."

"Unless he goes to sleep," suggested Jennie Lane.

"Toodles is an old friend of mine," said Margaret. "And when I'm at the organ, he'll never desert me. Toodles will not let me break down."

"No, m'm!" protested the boy. "I'm gwine to stand to you an' dis hyer awgin."

Margaret took her seat at the organ. At her touch the instrument seemed to breathe a life of its own. As she sat playing—never looking at notes, but with her eyes lifted and seeming to

consider thoughts and strains far beyond mortal composition or mortal expression—Eleanor Field felt a sense of awe. And when she glanced at the somber face of Margaret Mason's kinsman, resting his head on his hand, and bent forward, she wondered how he might ever become worthy of the most beautiful and spiritual friend she had ever known.

When the services began all went well enough till they reached the reading of the *Te Deum*. There Mr. Vaughn went wild. He read with the minister, he read the wrong lines; he was always much too fast, or culpably too slow; and finally when he got to the sentence, "When thou took'st upon thee to deliver man, thou didst humble thyself to be born of a virgin," he shrieked out, in piercing tones, after the former part of the sentence and after every other voice was still—"to be born of the Virgin Mary." The Rector paused, and gazed over his glasses; Jennie Lane fell against the teacher in spasmodic excitement; Mr. Boller groaned; Colonel Jenkins cleared his throat, with much noise. There was a suppressed ripple of laughter throughout the church. Only two persons seemed to resist successfully the inclination to laugh. William Huntley pulled one end of his mustache and kept his eyes on his prayer-book. Margaret Mason never changed countenance, but touched Jennie Lane with one hand. Marcus Aurelius, however, never suspected that he had done wrong, or given cause for merriment, but stood, placid, smiling and expectant, till the old minister resumed his reading.

When the reading was concluded, Eleanor said to Margaret:

“He is very hard to carry along!”

“A very heavy weight, as well as a very light one,” whispered Margaret, smiling.

CHAPTER XXX

The work at school, notwithstanding the ever-increasing sultriness of the weather and the sluggishness of the pupils, was satisfactory to the teacher. It was out of school that time lay most uncomfortably on her hands, for Eleanor felt that she grew more weary and debilitated every day. She lost her appetite, and her capacity for sleep, and began to fear that she could not last to the end of July, when the term was intended to close. After that she was to have two months' vacation, which promised a sufficient recuperation to sustain her till cool weather came—as she learned it usually did by November. She toiled on, growing more tired and unhappy every day, less interested in her duties, less hopeful of the future, less reconciled to her surroundings.

Mrs. Williams was as gentle and considerate as ever, and the Squire was always courteous and attentive to her, in his pompous and self-satisfied style; and at least twice in every week Margaret Mason either called to talk with her, or else took her driving through the vast cloud of dust that hung, more or less thick, over the parched land. But these things occupied but a small portion of the long, hot, breezeless, sweltering days, or of the close, silent, pulseless nights.

At last the sultry, wearing July came to a close, and with it the school term. Mr. Cogburn insisted upon public commencement exercises, but Colonel Tomlinson and Huntley objected; and

consequently the teacher was spared an exertion which, she felt, would have completely exhausted her remaining strength.

She thought, for a time, before the vacation, that she ought to go home for the two months, but on calculating the expense, she concluded that she could not afford to do so. It would cost about thirty dollars each way and she could remain where she was for fifteen dollars per month. It would be a dreary period, those two sultry months of virtual solitude, but she had come here to earn money, and to save it, and thirty dollars additional outlay would leave her with an almost empty purse at the reopening of the school. Besides, she thought, she would be more likely to gain favor and confidence among these people by remaining with them than she should by leaving them as soon as she ceased to receive their money.

She was not sanguine of success as to receiving social recognition and personal sympathy. Her nursing of sick pupils, and especially of Minnie Haxwell, had led many to speak well of her; Margaret Mason's friendship had been an assurance of her worth; several of her pupils besides those she cared for in sickness had evinced an attachment to her; and there was no suggestion from any one that she was lacking in any mental or moral or social quality. Yet there remained the same wall of ostracism shutting her off from the people around her, and shutting her off almost as completely as it did on the day of her arrival in the village. As has been stated, no one was aggressive toward her. All the men, women, and children in the place, with the exception of the

Widow Hayblow and two unreasonable mothers, who had withdrawn their children from the school within a month after she began to teach, had been civil to her whenever they chanced to meet her or write her; and she had never heard a word spoken against her personally. But there the wall of ice stood, as thick, as cold, and as solid as ever.

She had learned that the people of this section were, in some respects, widely different from what she had been taught to think of them. Instead of a population "bright and fierce and fickle," as the world as well as poets describe the races living in or near the tropic zone, she found one slow of thought, slow of speech, deliberate in action, and tenacious of opinions, sentiments, and traditions—a people lacking in imagination, deficient in humor, with a small and undeveloped esthetic faculty, and without nervous excitability. The men, she saw, were exceedingly sensitive in all matters involving personal courage, or personal veracity, or personal honor, and the women ready to resent any speech or action indicating disregard of their dignity or respectability. But, with those exceptions, both sexes were more steady than bright, more resolute than daring, more obstinate than active. And when she became acquainted with their history she wondered why she and those who had written of them had erred so grossly in their conception of them; for she found that these people were only the natural descendants of the race that drove foot by foot before them the aborigines of the soil, just as her forefathers had done in New England; that in the

war of the Revolution they had contested every particle of territory, in a hundred battles of greater or less importance, during the last three years of that war, when their cause was desperate; and that, in the war of secession, the Confederate soldiers had been worthy of their ancestors.

Eleanor also learned that as much praise as they deserved for service in battle, the Confederate soldiers deserved more for their fortitude and patience in enduring the hardships and trials of the camp and the march, and learned that the women of that section suffered bravely and steadily all the toils, privations, and bereavements incident to a contest waged by a people of small resources and inferior numbers against one vastly stronger in all things needed and employed in warfare.

So the stranger appreciated, after a time, what kind of people she had encountered; and having such knowledge, she learned how to regard and treat them. Nevertheless, she could not but feel that they were unjust to her, and unreasonable, in keeping her still under the ban, after trying her for half a year and finding no fault in her.

The summer wore on with little change of feature, all the days being hot, and all the nights sultry, and none of either very different from another, except that at one time there was parching drought, at another a thunder-storm, at one time a somewhat cooling breeze, at another no breeze at all. The village was quiet during the day, and almost deserted, except on Saturdays, when hundreds of negroes poured in from the country, in

wagons, on horseback or muleback, or on foot, and stayed till late, some of them till midnight, sauntering about the streets, gossiping, devouring watermelons and such other food as they could buy for money or on credit, standing in the sun, sitting in the sun, and sometimes sleeping in the sun. The women affected parasols and umbrellas, but half the time they held those coverings where they furnished no protection. Cindy said that they carried those things "jis' 'cause it looked like white folks." The nights were more lively than the days. Then the negro, always a nocturnal animal, straggled much about the streets, whooped at the top of his voice, and droned lugubrious melodies. Then the white youth exercised their voices in the shrill yell which Confederate charges have made historic and the males of each race fired pistols into the air, just to make a noise. There was a good deal of "preaching" in a negro church, about five hundred yards from Squire Williams's, and it was accompanied with much noise. First, there was singing, by the whole congregation, which was very pleasant to hear; then followed loud praying, which sometimes induced shouting; then came the sermon, which grew constantly more animated, till the parson bawled, and blew, and gasped, and his hearers, especially the females, caught the infection of his zeal, and moaned, and stamped their feet, and howled, and shrieked. And these unearthly sounds, with occasional intervals of comparative quiet or singing, were often continued till past midnight. The men made little noise audible at a distance; but many of the women,

at almost every meeting, appeared to become positively frantic. They stamped, they clapped their hands, they jumped up and down, they screamed. Usually some of them concluded by "falling into a trance," as they called it; that is, into a cataleptic state, in which they lay on the floor, and in which they were sometimes carried home. The teacher saw from her window, several times, as many as three or four women carried along the street while in that state—or feigning it. It was said to have become a habit with four or five of the congregation.

Once, in the month of August, the negroes had a "hot supper" in the church. That was a fearful orgy. They did not dance or sing secular music—both of those things they considered unpardonably sacrilegious. But they laughed and hallooed so as to be heard for a mile or more, and finally became involved in quarrels and strife. Many pistol shots were fired, one negro was killed, three more were wounded, two were carved with razors, one was severely stabbed, and not a few were severely beaten. When the man was killed there was a regular stampede which sounded like the roar of thunder, and Eleanor heard large numbers of the crowd passing the Squire's house at a run. Cindy showed on her cheek bone, the next day, a swelling almost as large as a hen's egg, the result of a blow received in the melee. She vowed that that should be her last "hot supper"; but in a fortnight she went to another, and came home with a badly torn gown, and less her bonnet and handkerchief.

The experiences since the first of May had op-

erated to quiet many lawless white men, and the absence of others, in hiding or in self-imposed exile, prevented them from violence. But occasionally a negro was met on the highway and beaten by masked or otherwise unrecognizable men—sometimes, it was thought, by negroes who pretended to be Ku Klux, in order to wreak their enmity on their fellows. A squad of soldiers went to arrest a white man, supposed to be hidden in a large body of woods. They found a dead negro on the edge of the forest, but no white man in it.

The Democratic party of the United States, at its convention in Baltimore, during this summer, joined with "Liberal Republicans" in nominating Horace Greeley for President, against General Grant, the Republican nominee for a second term. This action gave Eleanor Field much comfort and hope, for it indicated a more kindly feeling in the South toward the North, and offered an adjustment of the differences between the two sections.

The teacher's relations with the people about her were hardly, if at all, changed during the vacation. Margaret Mason visited her, and she visited Margaret, sometimes spending a day or two at Oak Hall; but no other woman called on her, and she was not invited to any other house. Minnie Haxwell's mother allowed her to visit Eleanor once, for an hour. But her health improved, and she passed much time pleasantly in reading the books of the Squire, who had about two thousand volumes, mostly law and text books, but embracing a good many standard works of literature. Yet it was a dreary season, and she welcomed the month of October, which brought with it the reopening of the school.

CHAPTER XXXI

Twenty-five scholars were present at the opening, and within a fortnight three more came. Seven of the total number were new ones. Several of those who attended at the close of the former term were kept at home to pick the cotton crop, and were so occupied to the end of the year. Of the others not returning, Miss Field received no account.

The harvesting of corn and cotton, practically the crops of the country, engaged both races so constantly that neither indulged to any notable extent in the misbehavior common among the idle. There was some rioting at the county-seat on the second Tuesday in November, the general election day, where at least five-sixths of the negroes of the county went to vote, though there were twelve voting precincts in the county. The garrison of Federal troops had to interpose to keep the peace, and the civil authorities arrested five of the black leaders; but no one was killed or seriously injured. The Republican blacks created the disturbance by assaulting some of the few of their race who voted the Democratic ticket, and the negro women near the polls urged their friends to kill those whom they denounced as traitors. But the whites defended their colored adherents with fists and sticks, and by a display of pistols, but without firing a shot, until the soldiers dispersed the rioters; and no one of either race suffered anything worse than kicks and

blows. Marcus Aurelius Vaughn had the misfortune to have his silk hat battered again, and his toes trodden on, and Colonel Jenkins had the skirt of his frock coat somewhat torn; but there were no other casualties among Eleanor's acquaintances.

All the night before the election the roads resounded with the songs, shouts, and pistol-firing of negroes going to the county-seat to vote, and equal or greater noise was made by them during the following night as they returned home.

A few days later, in the afternoon, Cindy came into Eleanor's room, tittering and fidgiting.

"Good evenin', Miss Ellen," said she.

"Good evening, Cindy," returned the teacher, looking up from her book.

"You don't want no fresh water, does you, Miss Ellen?"

"No, thank you. You brought me some half an hour ago."

"An' don't you want no mo' wood? It might git cold by mawnin'."

"I have quite enough, thank you."

"An' dar ain't nothin' mo' I kin do fur you?"

Eleanor had learned the habit of negroes to lead up gradually to whatever of moment they had in their minds; so she laughed and said, "Go on, Cindy, and tell me what it is that brought you here."

"I 'clar', Miss Ellen," cried the woman, giggling, "you beats all fur comin' to de p'int right away."

"You were going to say—" suggested Eleanor.

"Well, I jis' wanted to ax you ef you knowed anything 'bout 'vo'ces."

"Voces? What are voces?"

"Them things what they gits when a man an' a woman wants to sipirate."

"Do you mean divorces? When the court separates husband and wife?"

"Adzactly," returned Cindy, with satisfaction.

"I can't say I do."

"Lord 'a mussy!" exclaimed Cindy. "I thought you—a-comin' frum de Nawth—knowed all about 'em."

"I don't see why," said the teacher, somewhat irritated.

"I axes your parding," protested Cindy. "But I hyeerd folks say as how they had a heap mo' of that sorter thing up thar as we has down hyar."

"Cindy, I have never seen a divorce trial, I have never read the account of one, I have never known a man or woman who had been divorced, and if I ever chanced to read a line on the law of divorce I do not recollect it."

"Well, well, well!" murmured Cindy, disconcerted. "I been thinkin' you could help me."

"But what's the matter?" asked Eleanor. "I hope you are in no danger of being hurt by divorce laws."

"Lord bless you!" cried Cindy, laughing. "I ain't gwine to be hu't by 'em. I was a-hopin' they mought help me."

"Oh, Cindy!"

"Well, Miss Ellen," cried the woman, speaking rapidly and loudly, "you see dar's my husban'

Abram White, which I married him jis' atter de wah, which I been livin' with Jim Mason down tell freedom; but when freedom come, Jim gits tired o' me, and I gits tired o' him, an' folks says dar was no rale marryin' of niggers in slavery times, an' Jim was goin' to see Mandy Tommleson too much anyhow, an' so me an' him quit, an' I got married in de chu'ch to Abram, which he was a 'spectable man, what was wait'n' on Mr. Lubeck's sto', an' everything been gone well tell Rachel Farlow come hyar, an' den Abram, he gone 'stracted 'bout dat yaller nigger, an' don't fetch me no money nor nothin' to eat, an' I gits tired o' washin' his clo'es an' savin' up victuals for him, an' her doin' nothin' but sett'n' up in her house in Mr. Cogburn's settlement, an' she's got lots o' fine clo'es, an' sometimes I don't see Abram fur a week or mo'. An' I ain't gwine to stan' it, an' I'm gwine to git 'vo'ced fum him, ef I kin. Now I done tole de whole noration!"

And then she set her hands on her hips and regarded the teacher, looking very angry, and breathing loudly.

"You'd best consult Mr. Williams," said Eleanor. "He's a lawyer, and can tell you what to do."

"I done bin to him," cried Cindy. "An' he won't have nothin' to do wid it. He don't b'lieve in 'vo'ces."

"Then go to some other lawyer."

"But dey all charges too much money. Some cullud folks bin try it, an' dey ain't done payin' yit. So mos' of 'em got to takin' de law in dey own han's."

"How's that?"

"Wy, jis' 'vo'cin' deyse'ves, an' gittin' married ag'in."

"That's bigamy, and punishable as a crime, as well as being a great sin."

"I dunno 'bout dat; but it's jis' what dey does—or wuss. I 'feared I got to do like de res'."

So she went away in a bad temper, and before many days she described a great, black, greasy man who was seen frequently in the yard as her "man," who had taken the place of the unfaithful Abram.

About the first of December the Ku Klux trials began at the capital of the State, and the teacher soon perceived their effect on the people of the village, in their close undertone conferences on the street, in their averted faces, and in their ungracious speech to her. Even the children at school spent portions of the recesses in grave conversation, and they seemed to eye her with suspicion. A considerable number of men in the village and county had been bound over to that term of court, and several bills of indictment were preferred, and found by the grand jury. No one knew when his case might be called, and it was expected that no consideration would be shown when the prosecuting attorney was ready to proceed. Consequently, twenty or more of the accused went to the capital of the State at the opening of the court, each taking with him several witnesses and his counsel. Probably a hundred men were therefore away from home, at no little expense and inconvenience, for about a month. Colonel Jen-

kins, Huntley, Vaughn and Tom Jernigan were among the number. Squire Williams went also and was gone nearly a month. About the same number of negroes went, from first to last, but they were never absent so long. A Republican judge, very hostile to the native whites, and a district attorney bent on convicting every defendant, ran the business of the court. A few days after the beginning of the term, a man living ten or twelve miles from Cherenden was convicted of severely whipping, in conjunction with five others, at night, a negro in his neighborhood, the others with him not being identified, and was sentenced to two years' imprisonment in the penitentiary at Albany, New York. The negro was a notorious thief, idler, and disturber of the peace, and the accused was a man of good reputation.

A week later, another, living on the other side of the county, was tried for a similar offense, convicted and sentenced to a like term in the penitentiary. He, it appeared, was the owner of a pretty good property, but less peaceable in his manner of life than the first. Squire Williams afterward said that in each case the testimony (entirely of negroes) was grossly insufficient, and that what there was was very conflicting as to material facts. These convictions caused a bitter outcry at Cherenden, and the sentences were regarded as excessive and cruel. Two or three days before Christmas the court took a recess, with a good many cases still open on the docket, so that the accused and their witnesses, who were allowed to return to their homes, came weary and angry. There were but two or three acquittals,

and these against the most energetic protests of the prosecuting attorney. He never *nol-prossed* a case, and never consented to withhold a bill of indictment, though he failed to present bills in a number of cases.

The school, by direction of the trustees, was given vacation from the Friday before Christmas until the second Monday in January. On Christmas day, Tuesday, there was a union service of the several religious denominations in the village, at the Methodist church. The house was well filled, the singing was fair, and the exercises interesting. There was no reference in the prayers or short addresses of the ministers to the existing political situation; nor was there anything said which might not reasonably be heard at the teacher's own neighboring church in New England. She feared at first that it might be otherwise; but when she recollected that she had never heard a sermon in Cherenden on a political subject, or containing any direct mention of or a reference to politics or race issues themselves, or to American history except as applicable to the whole Union, she ventured to go to the service.

The sermon was delivered by a Baptist clergyman from another county—an old man with a benevolent face and a musical voice. He selected for his text a portion of the sixth verse of the ninth chapter of Isaiah—"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given * * * and his name shall be called * * * The Prince of Peace." He referred to the universal peace which reigned when the Saviour was born; how meek and lowly the God-man was; how he in-

veighed against strife between peoples and between persons; how he taught forbearance, forgiveness and brotherly love.

He referred in brief terms to the unhappy dissensions in this land between the men of the same blood and professing the same faith, and quoted the passage in the Epistle to the Ephesians where St. Paul speaks of Christ breaking down "the middle wall of partition" which had existed between Jews and Gentiles, preaching peace to those that were nigh, and building them together for a habitation of God in the Spirit. And he closed with Timrod's verses:

" 'He who, till time shall cease,
Will watch the earth, where once, not all in vain,
He died to give us peace, may not disdain
A prayer whose theme is—peace.

" 'Peace in the crowded town,
Peace in a thousand fields of waving grain,
Peace in the highway and the flowery lane,
Peace on the wind-swept down!

" 'Peace on the whirring marts,
Peace where the scholar thinks, the hunter roams,
Peace, God of Peace! Peace, peace, in all our homes,
And peace in all our hearts!'

The bereaved old gentleman whom Eleanor so often met on her way to school murmured a fervent "amen," and several of the older men echoed it. A brief hymn and the benediction concluded the service; and then the large congregation left the church slowly and silently. Margaret Mason came to Eleanor at the door, and kissed her, saying softly:

"Oh, dear, you have been weeping, just as I have."

"I was not aware of it," returned Eleanor, "though I was greatly moved."

"He is a dear old man, that Mr. Armstrong," said Margaret. "He is very poor and his health feeble; his good wife died only a year ago; and he is all alone, his three sons having been killed in the Confederate service, and his one daughter having moved with her husband to western Texas a long time ago."

CHAPTER XXXII

During the holiday Eleanor received an invitation to join her friend Agnes Meacham in a visit of two or three days to the capital of the State; and needing some articles of apparel which could not be procured in Cherenden, she accepted, and accompanied her there in the early days of January.

On the third day of their stay there Mrs. Meacham proposed to go to the State legislature, then in session, adding, "The Captain says it is a disgusting menagerie of half-tamed barbarians and thieves, and would hardly consent to my going to see them. But we needn't stay long; and it is a sight, according to all accounts, that is to be seen only in this section, and probably only for a short time." So they went, escorted, very reluctantly, by the Captain himself.

Their first glance, at the door of the House of Representatives, revealed a fat, very black, very loud-voiced negro in the Speaker's chair. His principal business seemed to be to hammer the desk vigorously with his mallet, and talk with a clerk at his elbow. Yet he was not sparing of his voice, for he bawled, "Mr. Snoddy," or "Mr. Washington," or "Mr. Whetstone," as members rose to speak, in a tone that made the hall ring; and he had often to remind the multitude who tried to speak that "Mr. Farmer," or "Mr. Bostin," had the floor—which he announced in a roar, while banging the desk as if driving piles.

Of a hundred or more men on the floor at least three-fourths were negroes, the majority of whom were pretty black. The teacher, by the accent and pronunciation, at once recognized the majority of the whites who spoke as Northern men. She heard only one Southern man speak, whose views showed him to be a Democrat. She was informed that there were only eight or ten such in the body, the other native whites, some five or six in number, being "scalawags"—and "wretched apologies for legislators," as Mrs. Meacham said. The negroes were in their glory. Often a dozen of them would spring to their feet at the same moment, all of them bawling "Mr. Speakah!" and some of them gesticulating wildly. The galleries were nearly filled with mulatto women, some of them handsomely dressed, most of them arrayed in peculiar and gaudy apparel. The greater part of them kept up an incessant chatter and laughter, accompanied by much twisting and turning and flaunting of handkerchiefs and parasols. Many of them exchanged salutations and signals with the members of their own race on the floor. The "carpet-baggers" apparently had no taste for such social courtesies. Quite a company of negro boy pages ran, and darted, and skipped over the floor, answering the snapping of fingers and whistles of members, or doing their errands. Some of the negro members were positively hideous, having very black skins, narrow, sharp craniums, cunning, vicious eyes, flat noses, excessively pugnacious faces, and disgustingly thick, gross lips. These ugliest ones spoke a dialect entirely new to the teacher.

There was before the House a bill "to amend an Act, entitled 'An Act for the protection and preservation of useful animals'"—that is, deer and wild birds of various kinds.

The purpose of the amending Act was to permit the killing of deer as early as the first day of August, instead of the first day of September; also to extend the open season for wild turkey, "partridges" and other game birds, from the fifteenth of February, as it had been, to the fifteenth of April; and thirdly, to deprive the "robin" of the protection he had under the original Act. One wide-mouthed, heavy-tongued mulatto opposed the bill with clamorous energy, especially in behalf of the "lovely deer, which goes a-boundin' over the glades and the heathers," and which, "in olden times so numerous, is now almost depopulated in Nawth Ca'loina, Sawth Ca'loina an' Jawjer," and inveighed, amid much applause, against excluding from the immunity—"impunity," he called it—enjoyed by mocking-birds and others, the "Robin Red-breast, so much ventilated in poetry and tales, the Robin Red-breast, the visitor from the great Nawth, the land of emancipation and cullud rights."

He had hardly closed, when, regardless of the applause, a small, rusty member of the Guinea type sprang up like a Jack-in-the-box, and proceeded to advocate all the amendments. He was almost unintelligible to the teacher; but Captain and Mrs. Meacham, who had spent a year or more in the seacoast region, interpreted to her. After a bit, some member intimated that the member had not studied the two bills.

“De hon’able gemman say I enty study de bill,” cried he. “I let de gemman know I bin study ’em for true. I tek great pain to fin’ out what de dejection to de new law what come up. Gawd a’ mighty done set down de deer in dis country fer kill an’ eat; an’ de up-countryman what never eat wenson enty know how good he is. An’ likewise de pattidge, an’ de turkle dove, an’ also de robin. Wat mek we not kill an’ eat all dem t’ing all ’e year roun’? If we gwine keep on dis way, I ’spec’ we git a law atter while what won’t ’low us to hunt ’possum an’ raccoon!” And down he dropped, amid murmurs from his delegation of “Yes, Lord!” “Dat’s a fac’!”

Mrs. Meacham was much amused, but Eleanor Field was disgusted. So when the Captain, who had been grumbling, proposed to quit the hall, she seconded him so earnestly that her friend yielded. But Mrs. Meacham insisted on taking a look at the Senate Chamber, where, she said, it would not be so bad. There they found a large yellow man—a mulatto—presiding. The members were, generally, of a lighter complexion than those in the House. The Northern white men seemed to be more numerous as well as the ruling element. But there were some mulattoes, and several black men. The teacher learned that there were only four native whites, Democrats, in the whole body. There were fewer colored women in the galleries, and these made less demonstration than the female spectators in the House. There were no white women present besides the teacher and her friend—as had been the case in the House. The business was of a very uninteresting kind.

There was little said on the floor, and that almost entirely by white men. One large, raw-boned, black negro made some point not plainly heard by the visitors, and attempted to give it force by reading, with considerable difficulty, some lines of verse from a slip of paper, and applauded his own effort with a loud laugh; but the others of his race spent most of their time sprawled over their desks, and writing, or pretending to write. The three spectators remained but a few minutes.

"Well," said Captain Meacham to the teacher, when they left the building, "what do you think of the legislature?"

"It is a horrible travesty—a hideous farce," answered she.

"It is bad, very bad," said Mrs. Meacham. "But it is so ludicrous to me, who have witnessed such performances before, that I am amused when it is before me."

"It is a shame," cried the Captain, "a vile shame, that the Army should be employed to keep those beasts and villains in power!"

"I recalled," said Eleanor, "again and again, the words of Isabella on 'proud man, drest in a little brief authority,' especially these—

" 'Like an angry ape,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As make the angels weep.' "

"Yes," added the Captain, "you saw apes themselves perform this morning."

They walked some distance in silence. Finally the Captain said gravely, "I'm not sure but I'd

be a sort of Ku Klux myself if I were a citizen of this State!"

"Fie! fie!" exclaimed his wife.

"Well," said he, "that is going too far, perhaps; but I tell you, no people can stand this sort of thing; and the people won't stand it. The shame of the situation is bad enough; but that is not all, nor the worst of it. The white people of this State left its government a little more than four years ago, when, after all its wars and other expensive experiences, there was a public debt of about six million dollars. Now that debt is fifteen million dollars, or more; and there is nothing to show for it. Those villains impose ruinous taxes, make no improvements, make a mockery of justice, give no security or other benefit to the people, live in luxury, sensuality, and every kind of debauchery, and threaten the very foundations of civilization. I expect them to put the finishing touch to their robbery by repudiating the bonds they have foisted on innocent purchasers here and at the North. That measure is under discussion now."

So it was. And at the next session of the legislature an Act was passed funding all bonds and stocks of the State at fifty per cent. of their face value, including the old debts of upward of five million dollars, which were, unquestionably, valid, subsisting obligations of the State.

Eleanor was shown some handsome residences in the same city, and several fine equipages on the streets, owned by Republican politicians, some white, some black—who, four years before, had been hardly better than paupers, and who had no

trade, profession, craft, or other vocation, except office-holding and political work.

She returned to Cherenden more reconciled than she had been to the prejudices of the white race there, and better fortified to endure her painful ostracism.

CHAPTER XXXIII

The prosecution of persons charged with Ku Klux outrages was resumed in the United States court in January; and many under indictment returned to the capital of the State, with their counsel and witnesses, and remained there for a time. But few cases were tried. Several of the accused, after conviction, made confessions, evidently in the hope of light sentences, and of subsequent pardon. These confessions, confined to whipping negroes, were disgusting, and sometimes horrifying; but they came from men in low ranks of life, ignorant, and in great fear, so that they excited little interest, and received little credit. The fact that they implicated many of the neighbors and friends of the culprits deprived them of the merit of repentance and purpose of amendment which might otherwise have attached to them; for they had the appearance of a readiness to sacrifice others in order to secure better terms for those who volunteered them. The court demonstrated its small consideration for the confessing by imposing heavy sentences and omitting to hold out any hope of pardon. The two convicts from the county in which Cherenden lay declined to say anything at all.

But the term was short, and soon after its adjournment it was generally understood that the prosecutions were ended. All citizens attending the court came home, and the tension of months of anxiety and ill feeling was perceptibly relaxed.

The teacher saw it in the faces of the children and in the demeanor of the men and women of the village, and deriving much satisfaction from it, adopted, sometimes purposely, sometimes unconsciously, a more cordial manner toward the people than she had previously thought proper or wise, and they, partly of their own motion, partly in response, became more thoughtful and agreeable in their manner toward her. By the beginning of spring, scarcely a man met or passed her without lifting his hat; women who had met her months before, but never recognized her on the street, bowed to her; the clerks in stores were more prompt and courteous than formerly, and the pupils were about as respectful and diligent as could be expected in any community. So, though not entirely content with the present nor confident of the future, she was far happier and more hopeful than she had been since the day of her arrival in the village. Her health grew better, and she performed her work and lived her life with cheerfulness and considerable enjoyment.

On the first day of May there was a village ball at the hotel, to which she was invited, and went. The staid, old-fashioned community did not tolerate round-dancing except among ladies; but she was asked to dance every set in the country dances, in the lancers, and in the Virginia reel. Colonel Jenkins, Mr. Vaughn, Mr. Boller, the merchant and basso, and—to her utter amazement—Colonel Tomlinson danced with her. A young collegian, the son of Mr. Lubeck, who was at home on short vacation, danced with her, took her to supper, and did all he could to make

himself agreeable. Two of Colonel Jenkins's old-maid sisters left the wall to which they looked to be positively glued, to be introduced to her. Sarah Ann Jernigan had to kiss her, giving her a loud smack which made Margaret Mason laugh outright, and say, "Why, Sarah Ann, you are in earnest." "Yes, Miss Margaret," returned the other, blushing and laughing, "I always am in yearnest."

Some days later, meeting Eleanor on the street, Margaret said, "I told you so! You were the favorite at the ball. Now you may feel perfectly sure; for you have the *vise* of the Lubecks and the *imprimatur* of Colonel Tomlinson."

"I should not have thought those credentials as valuable as your friendship," returned Eleanor, half in laughter and half in earnest.

"Yes, they are," said Margaret. "We are pretty fair people—we Masons and Huntleys—in the estimation of Cherenden; but those other two families are at the head of their respective departments—aristocracy and purse-proud shoddyism."

At that moment Huntley joined them; and Margaret said to him, "I have just reminded Eleanor of the value of the favor of Colonel Tomlinson and the Lubecks."

"And I said," cried Eleanor, "that the good will of the families of Mason and Huntley is of greater importance."

"She doesn't understand," pursued Margaret, "that those specialists ought to be ranked above us who have good blood, but do not make it our

stock in trade, and have some property, but do not serve, worship, and parade it."

"You are exactly right," said Huntley. "Blood and money are two things that command respect here, and the man who has and stands entirely on either seems more important than one who has both, yet has not more of either than every one else, and does not devote himself to either. Lubeck is the specialist, as you have called it, in one line, Colonel Tomlinson in the other."

"But how?" inquired Eleanor.

"Well," said Huntley, "Lubeck has more money than any other man or family in the county, and no blood, breeding, or education. He is, therefore, fully the Plutus, or Mammon (if there was ever a deity of that name), whom the crowd worship. And the Colonel is—aristocracy pure and simple."

"I know that Mr. Lubeck works and heaps up riches," said Eleanor. "But what does Colonel Tomlinson do?"

"*Il se pose*," answered Huntley, and passed on.

About the middle of June, the Williamses gave what Mr. Vaughn called a "tea-fight," evidently in compliment to the teacher. Colonel Tomlinson and his frail little wife were there. Colonel Jenkins brought his eldest sister, Miss Emeline, a tall, yellow, prim, diffident lady of about forty years, who said, "Yes, sir," and "Yes, ma'am," to others. Mr. and Mrs. Cogburn came, the latter being a stout woman with a large but withered face, resembling an apple plucked before maturity. Mrs. Mason and Margaret were present. So was Mr. Vaughn, and also Mr. Boller, the pleasant-spoken

merchant. Huntley sent word that they should not wait for him, as he might not be able to come at all. As it was, he arrived near the close of the meal, and took only two or three "sweet wafers" and a glass of milk.

Mrs. Cogburn, whom the teacher now met for the first time, seemed to be a good-natured woman, for she spoke very pleasantly, and repeated compliments paid her teaching and manners by her children and others. But she was inquisitive and under-bred, and soon after tea went to discussing the political situation, and probing the teacher. Margaret endeavored to divert her, but she always returned to the subject, which evidently weighed on her mind. Colonel Jenkins, who, sanguinary as he was in regard to warfare, was always careful of the feelings of the company he was in, interposed, saying, that "all sorts of things looked in all sorts of ways to all sorts of people," and that "it didn't matter what people thought, so they behaved well." For which last utterance he received the approbation of Mr. Vaughn, who remarked, "That is an eminently wise observation, Samuel." Colonel Tomlinson was annoyed, and attempted to draw off the lady by inquiries concerning her daughter Laura's health; but in vain. The sleuth hound was on the trail, and she was set on following it to the end. Finally, Huntley, who had been playing *solitaire* with cards, at the other side of the parlor where they all sat, turned to Mrs. Cogburn, and said:

"Mrs. Cogburn, you know John Stationer, don't you?"

"To be sure," answered she. "I've known John for twenty years. What of him?"

"Well, Erasmus Harrison asked him the other day what sort of a house he thought Dan Jones had. John answered that he thought it a very good one. Erasmus, who doesn't like Dan, was of a different opinion, and proceeded to describe the kitchen, back piazza, and other things, in the rear of the building. To which John responded by saying that he could only judge from what he saw—the front. And this, which was the case with the knights each of whom saw only one side of the shield, determined John's mind, just as his critical inspection of the rear of the house decided Erasmus's mind. Miss Field, until about eighteen months ago, heard and read of only one side of this political matter. I have no doubt that she has been studying it, since she has been here, in another light. She's been seeing the back door of our house for, perhaps, ten years; she ought to have a somewhat like period to observe the front part of it."

"She's been at the front door for nearly a year and a half," cried Mrs. Cogburn, with a giggle; "for she's been knowing you, and Miss Margaret, and Mrs. Mason, about that long."

"Thank you," returned Huntley. "But you must remember that she never met Mrs. Cogburn till a month ago, and saw her then only five minutes or so. I don't know that she has ever enjoyed the benefit of even a moment's speech with Mrs. Hayblow."

"You haven't seen the State legislature, have you?" asked Mrs. Cogburn, presently, upon Eleanor's referring to the negro as a ruler.

"I have. I saw both houses in session, in January."

"And what did you think of it?" inquired the other lady eagerly.

"I thought it the most disgusting and horrible spectacle I ever witnessed."

"Why," interposed Margaret Mason, "she came home almost sick from it."

"Aha!" ejaculated Mrs. Cogburn; and then she seemed to fall into deep reflection.

"One or the other of the races must rule," remarked Huntley.

"And there can be no doubt as to which will ultimately rule," said Colonel Jenkins, with a confident air.

"None whatever," said Huntley. "The change may not come for several years; but this riotous plundering and debauchery, these tumultuous elections, this filling of great public offices with thieves, drunkards, dunces and ruffians, restrained only by a sense of personal danger, must come to an end before long. We cannot stop vagrancy and private vice; but we shall show that we can govern in public affairs."

"The negro will be protected in his person and property," suggested Eleanor.

"Certainly," said Huntley. "I have never heard a man say, or propose, anything to the contrary. Moreover, our people will continue to provide for his education. How much benefit he will derive from the effort in that way I cannot undertake to say. But it will be prosecuted. Our own selfishness makes us desire intelligent citizens, of all races, and in all employment."

"What about religious training?" asked Mrs. Cogburn.

"Well," said Huntley, laughing, "that is a matter which I have not considered. You'd best inquire of Aunt Caroline and Margaret. They have given much more thought to it than I have. But we shall have little opportunity in that way, I suppose. About the first thing those people did was to withdraw from our churches, to have their own churches, and their own preachers. I imagine they would hardly listen to our missionaries. I don't blame them. The two races could not be on equality in the churches. It seems best that they should be separated all along the line, except as they may be thrown together in trade or work or other matters of mere business. They must move on parallel lines. There cannot be a dual government, and therefore they must be excluded from the management of governmental affairs, and, in my judgment, from any participation in government—legislative, judicial or executive. That is about our situation and our duty, as I see them. The negro must be protected in his person, and he must be fairly dealt with. Indeed, I and almost all our people think that many of his faults and of his offenses deserve more lenient treatment than we accord to the same things in white men. But in the matter of governing this land, we must, till we get control, carry on a struggle *a outrance*—not of extermination, not of persecution, but certainly of persistent and resolute action."

"I thought the phrase was *a l'outrance*," cried out Mr. Vaughn, while every one else laughed.

"And so a good many people think," answered

Huntley, good-naturedly. "Even Prescott, scholar that he was, employed that form several times in his '*Conquest of Mexico*.'"

"Miss Field," said Colonel Jenkins, "have you ever witnessed a negro parade?"

"No."

"Well, I want you to see one. The Fourth of July is the great occasion with them. In the cities the first of January—Emancipation Day—is celebrated with great zest, by great numbers of them. But in this part of the State the Fourth of July is the big thing. Then the weather is hot, and usually dry, and watermelons are in, and the day is long, so they can have an extensive frolic. I advise you, if you can leave your school, to go to the county-seat that day, and see the performance."

"I agree with Colonel Jenkins," said Huntley. "It is a sight well worth seeing—such a one as you can never see except in the South. The school, on account of the crowds of turbulent negroes in town, is always closed that day."

On making a calculation it was ascertained that the day would be on Friday, so that, if the teacher wished, she could go to town by rail the afternoon before, or early that morning, and return late in the evening, or the following day. Wishing to see her friend Agnes Meacham, and also to do some shopping, she acceded to the suggestion, in which all the party joined.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Eleanor went to the county-seat in the afternoon of Thursday, the third day of July, and took lodging at the hotel with the Meachams. The building stood facing the "public square" of the town—an area of about three acres, including the streets crossing it, and occupied only by the courthouse, which stood near the center. Mrs. Meacham's sitting-room was at the front of the hotel, on the second floor. The exercises of the next day were expected to be held principally in the "square."

Before sunrise, the sounds of many voices and feet were heard; and when the teacher looked through the window-shutters of her chamber, at six o'clock, she saw several hundred men, women, and children walking or standing in the square, or sitting at the doors and on the steps of the courthouse. When she and Mrs. Meacham returned from breakfast a few minutes after seven, the crowd had grown to two or three thousand, and as far as they could see along the streets streams of negroes were still slowly flowing in. Most of these were on foot, though a good many rode gaunt mules or horses; and not a few wagons, filled to their utmost capacity, drove into the open space and discharged their occupants. These wagons and the horses and mules seemed, under some order or arrangement, to be carried out of the square—no doubt for the purpose of allowing sufficient room for the great concourse of people expected. By nine o'clock there were on the square, according

to Captain Meacham's estimate, at least five thousand persons. At that time negroes on horseback, with great yellow and crimson sashes, swords, cockades, ribbons, and other insignia of office, arrived on the ground, and became very busy, riding through the dense masses, and evidently arranging for some movement. The Captain now left the hotel, to go to barracks, saying that there was no telling how soon or in what way he and his soldiers might be needed.

Some of the negro men, mostly the younger ones, were pretty smartly dressed, their white collars and shirt-bosoms contrasting strongly with their black faces. But a good many of them were in their rough, work-day garb, some of them being without coats. A great many of the boys were barefoot, and some of them very uncleanly, and even ragged. But the women were evidently arrayed in all their finery. Their hats—for none of them except a few old ones wore bonnets, and they sun-bonnets—were gaudily and excessively bedecked with large red and yellow and blue flowers, and with much ribbon of the same colors. And their gowns were largely of the same strong hues, many of them being of blazing red, and glaring yellow, or bright purple, and being in solid colors, or else in very large figures which reminded the teacher of the "furniture calicoes" she had seen in ancient window-curtains and in the curtains of the old-time "four-poster" bedsteads. And these women flaunted their highly tinted parasols incessantly, and were never still or silent. They waved parasols vigorously and spoke loudly when a large brown man whom they called "Colonel Duggins" rode among

them, just in front of the hotel, on a handsome brown horse, in all the glory of a red silk sash and a hat looped on one side with a huge red-white-and-blue cockade, and handling a drawn cavalry saber. The "Colonel" was soon followed by a corpulent, ginger-bread complexioned man, with an apoplectic expression of face, who held a good deal to the pommel of his saddle.

"Who is that, Maria?" asked Mrs. Meacham of the chambermaid, who had suspended her dusting to inspect the crowd from another window.

"Oh, that's Major Gales."

"The Major doesn't seem to sit comfortably in his saddle," remarked Mrs. Meacham.

"No'm," answered Maria, tittering, "he ain't no fine rider, nohow; an' he's been drinkin' too much liquor."

Presently, amid a great fluttering of parasols, crowding forward, tiptoeing, laughter and chatter, there passed a young, coal-black, sleek-skinned man, with a cocked hat, a great white plume, and much crimson sash, and a pair of enormous epaulettes.

"Who on earth is that?" inquired Mrs. Meacham.

"Law, ma'am," said Maria, "that's Colonel Skinner. He's de fines' dress', an' de fines' rider of all. Look at dat hoss!"

And sure enough, the sorrel steed of that "Colonel" curvetted and caracoled in great style.

"Colonels seem to be plentiful," observed Mrs. Meacham.

"Well," returned Maria, "dar ain't but one full colonel, which dat is Colonel Duggins. Dis here one is only a *nieutenant*-colonel, which he is de

Guv'ner's aid; an' dat how he wear de epperlits—representin' de Guv'ner, you see."

And several more "majors" and "captains" and "nieutenants" passed through the crowd, all of them endeavoring to open a way for something following them. This something was soon shown to be a band, consisting of two fifers, a clarionet blower, two kettle-drummers and one bass-drummer, all of whom made as much noise as possible. The man with the bass-drum was affected very much as "Major Gales" was, which caused his drum-stick to miss the head of the drum very often; but he always hit something, and hit vigorously, so that when he struck straight the volume of sound made up for many misses. The crowd generally fell in behind the band in a column of fifteen or twenty broad, and followed it out of the square.

"Well," said Eleanor, "is it all over?"

"No, indeed, mum," answered Maria. "Dey jis' takin' 'em out'en de squar, fer to fawm de percession. Den dey'll come back, a-marchin' 'long atter de ban' an' have lots o' speakin' on de cou't-house steps."

It was not long before the band reappeared on the opposite side of the square, with shrill fifing and energetic drum-beating, and followed by the officer-horsemen and a street full of men, women, and children on foot, marching in time with the music. After much pushing and bawling by the officers, the band made its way up the court-house steps, and took position in the portico above the crowd. Among those who followed were a few white men. These and the majority of the be-sashed officers

were seated on chairs arranged in the middle of the portico.

After more blowing and beating by the band, the speaking began. The speakers being in front of the hotel, and not more than fifty or sixty yards distant, and the crowd very attentive, the two ladies heard distinctly. The first one who spoke—a white man with decided Eastern accent and manner—talked in what is commonly called the “fourth-of-July” style, relating the revolt of the thirteen colonies, the achievement of their independence, the subsequent history of the United States, including the war of secession (“the rebellion,” as he called it), the emancipation of the slaves, and the “reconstruction” of the South. He contented himself with generalities, and his concluding advice to his audience was to prove by their course of action and manner of living that they deserved their freedom, and could be safely trusted in their use of it. He received only moderate applause, and it was evident that his speech had not a high enough flavor for that crowd.

After a little fifeing and drumming, he was followed by a yellow negro who excited much more feeling, as was manifested by repeated cries of “Tell it!” “Tell it agin!” “Dat’s so!” “Bless God, dat’s de troof!” and by loud and prolonged yells. This man told them to vote the Republican ticket every time; to fight the Democratic party with all their might; to ostracise any of their race who voted with the Democrats, by turning them out of their churches and refusing to associate with them or help them; to stand up for their rights, and to fight for them; to beware of Confederate soldiers,

who wanted to put them back into slavery; and finally, to destroy the Ku Klux whenever and wherever they found them. He concluded by saying that it was far better to die freemen than live as slaves, and proclaimed, with a tremendous exertion of voice, "Give me liberty, or give me death!" The vast crowd yelled, and shouted, and roared. They cried out many things, in which "God" and the name of the speaker were most frequent and most distinct. They laughed, they danced, they beat one another's shoulders and pulled one another's arms. So, with the noises of the people and those of the band, there was an awful din, which lasted for five or six minutes.

The third speaker, who looked to be a white man, but who, Maria said, was "a nigger same as me," pursued pretty much the line of thought and suggestion employed by the second, adding, however, very disgusting references to the conduct of many white men toward negro women, and saying that if any white man should "tamper with his pretty little wife" he would "shoot him down like a dog!" This utterance elicited a storm of howls from the men and wild cries from the women, accompanied by violent gesticulation by both sexes.

After that speech, and a selection by the band, the master of ceremonies introduced the fourth and last speaker. This was a thin, rather small, angular white man, with so poor a voice that his first two or three sentences were not audible at the hotel.

"I have seen that man here several times," said Mrs. Meacham. "He comes pretty often to talk with the Captain, who doesn't like him. His name

is Agnew, or Carew, or something like that. We are told that before the war he was a negro-trader."

"What was that?" asked Eleanor. "I thought that almost all men here bought and sold slaves."

"Yes," answered Mrs. Meacham; "but there were a few men who made it a business to buy slaves and sell them, carrying them mostly to the Southwest, where they commanded higher prices than in these older States. Such was this man's chief business, if not his only one."

"Yet these negroes favor such a man?"

"Yes; they are ready to condone any man's past, provided only he opposes the Democratic party of the United States and the white Democrats of the South, and preaches opposition to the whites and unlimited rule by the blacks and their allies."

The speaker was heard in silence for a time. Gradually his voice grew strong enough to reach, in that silence, to the distance of a hundred yards. As he grew warm his audience caught his fervor, and expressed their appreciation by the usual cries of "Tell it!" "Yes, Lord!" "Give it to 'em!" and the like.

He dwelt on the riches of the whites and the poverty of the blacks; the idleness and easy living of the former, and the hard work done by the latter; the danger of the reestablishment of slavery, the oppressions and persecutions suffered by the negro, and finally the horrors perpetrated by the Ku Klux Klan, to which, he asserted, all grown white men and a great many white boys belonged. At every step in his progress the enthusiasm of his hearers increased; so that, after a time, there were cries of rage and threatening mingled with their ap-

proval of the speaker's words. There was none of the laughter with which other men's periods had been greeted, but all expressions were in earnest, in a tone of wrath, and often combined with oaths. And the crowd moved and swayed, evidently wrought to the highest pitch of excitement.

In conclusion, the speaker, raising his voice to its utmost capacity, and delivering his words deliberately and with all the incisiveness he could command, cried:

"There is no other way for you out of this hell of robbery and persecution and murder. You have got to fight these white Democrats all the time, everywhere you meet 'em, and in everything. You've got to fight 'em at the polls; you've got to fight 'em in the courts; you've got to fight 'em in the legislature; you've got to fight 'em in every kind of business, and every day and every hour of your life. You've got to fight 'em with your votes, and if need be, with your fists, and your clubs, and your guns, and your pistols. And when all other weapons fail, remember, remember, remember!"—here he paused for some moments, amid unbroken silence, and then shouted "*Matches—cost—only—five—cents—a—box!*"

The diabolical suggestion conveyed in these last words appeared to be the climax desired by the audience. For two seconds, and until the speaker had resumed his seat, there was universal, dead silence. Then, as if all the multitude apprehended the force of the words at the same instant, there arose an uproar compared with which all former demonstrations seemed tame. Full five thousand voices broke forth in yells, howls, curses, boasts, threats and

shrieks, the exclamations of women and the shrill cries of children often prevailing over the deeper tones of the men. The men pushed and slapped one another, and the women waved and brandished and clashed their parasols till many of them were broken to pieces. Hats were flung into the air, sticks were flourished high, and guns and pistols freely displayed. Hundreds, of every age, and of each sex, jumped up and down, clapping their hands and shaking frantically whatever they held. Many of the crowd declared their feeling in plain terms: "Set 'em on fire!" "Burn dey houses to de groun'!" "Burn 'em all up!" And when the excitement was at its height, a powerful male voice started the strain of "John Brown's Body." At once a thousand voices joined in, and roared the song till the surrounding buildings trembled, while the multitude kept time with foot and hand, stamping the earth and waving and clashing their sticks, umbrellas, pistols, rifles, shotguns, and whatever else might make noise or display. This pandemonium, heightened by the screaming of fifes and banging of drums, and beating of clubs or stones on the walls and doors of the court-house, lasted for fully fifteen minutes. Meantime, small groups of white citizens stood at intervals on the sidewalks, and surveyed the scene in silence.

Eleanor was amazed and sickened. Before the tumult subsided, she left the window and took a seat where she could not see the mob.

"You are very pale," said her friend. "Are you ill?"

"I am sick at heart," she answered. "What is to become of these barbarians?"

There were, however, no actual collisions between blacks and whites, and no fighting among the blacks. When the uproar had lasted several minutes, a portion of the garrison, under the command of a lieutenant, were marched into the square on the side opposite the hotel, and there stacked arms on the sidewalk. What effect this had on the crowd could only be conjectured; but after that, the noise was not nearly so great as it had been, and before long the multitude began to disperse, a good many going one way, to a barbecue on the border of the town, and a good many more moving off in other directions. A considerable number, however, remained on the square when Eleanor went to the afternoon train to Cherenden. There were very few negroes on the train, and they were quiet enough; for there were more white men than negroes there.

She afterward learned that the meeting resulted in comparatively little violence. One drunken negro, it was reported, misinterpreting the presence of the soldiers on the ground, undertook to jostle a white man off the sidewalk, and suffered, for his temerity, a knock-down by the white man and some kicks by the soldiers. There were several heads of negroes more or less broken, at the barbecue, by other negroes; but those casualties were the results of attempts to get dinners without paying for them.

Until long after midnight the streets of Cherenden resounded with the songs, shouts and pistol-firing of negroes returning home from the meeting at the county-seat.

CHAPTER XXXV

Eleanor Field felt far more satisfied at the close of this school term than she had been the year before. The pupils had made much better progress, and appeared to be more contented and cheerful. She heard no complaints from the patrons, and received complimentary acknowledgments from several of them. Her health was now very good; and the future seemed brighter than ever before. She was invited, during the month of July, to dine at two houses—Dr. Thompson's and Mr. Cogburn's. To her amazement, Mrs. Lubeck had her take tea at her handsome, pretentious residence, and was quite cordial and well-behaved to her. Women as well as men bowed to her on the streets, once or twice women made room for her to sit with them at church. She was invited once to sing in the choir of the Presbyterian church, and once in that of the Methodist church, and each time was complimented and thanked by the choir, and by other persons. Haughty and fastidious Mrs. Lubeck, who had once been in New York for a week, was so gracious as to say that, except in that city, she had never heard a finer soprano voice than the teacher's, and the young ladies of the village evinced no jealousy of the stranger. Colonel Jenkins seemed to describe his people pretty accurately when he said, "When we hate people we hate 'em like fury, and when we like 'em we like 'em all to pieces." Perhaps it would require considerable prudence, a thoroughly modest bearing, and no little tact to retain

the good will she had at last secured; but the teacher was fully aware of the uncertainty of her position, and resolved to guard herself against over-confidence and the least indiscretion. Her long and painful probation was of much service in enabling her to reach this conviction, and also to act upon it.

So she looked forward with much more cheerfulness to spending a second summer here than she had felt in regard to the first one. Then she thought that she was condemning herself to most weary and dreary exile from all who loved her and all who allowed her to love them; now she had the pleasure of believing that she would be among friends.

But the holidays had hardly begun when she was invited to a recreation she had never expected or thought of. Margaret Mason came to her one morning, in quite a state of excitement. They had barely exchanged salutations, when she cried:

"I've come to tell you that, after consultation and mature deliberation, mamma, William, Colonel Jenkins, Mr. Vaughn, and I have decided to take a trip, and unanimously, first, last and all the time, voted that you must join us."

"Dear me!" exclaimed the teacher, laughing. "A picnic, or a fishing party?"

"Oh! a much bigger thing than either of those. Just listen for a minute, and I'll disclose the whole plan. We are to go to the mountains, for two or three weeks—perhaps for a month. We shall travel, by our own conveyances—mamma and I take our carriage and one-horse buggy. We and William together will have a four-horse wagon to carry our

tents, trunks, and other impedimenta, as William calls those things. The three gentlemen will travel on horseback. We shall have Jane, our coachman John, William's man Josh, and Colonel Jenkins's man Cyrus, for grooms and servants. Mr. Vaughn will, of course, take Toodles. We shall send the vehicles and the gentlemen ahead of us, by the road. We are going about a hundred miles by rail, to the foot of the mountains, where we all shall meet, and then all travel by horse power."

"And what is the principal point in the journey?"

"We, so far, have fixed no exact line of travel, leaving that to be determined by circumstances; but we expect to visit Toccoa and Tallulah Falls. I may say that Tallulah is the main point, as we shall have there the finest scenery, and can spend a longer time there, and in more comfort, than elsewhere."

"And tents—you expect to camp out?"

"To be sure—sometimes. That will be a large part of the fun of the trip. Now you are going, of course."

"Of course I will!" answered Eleanor, heartily. "I'm not so sure about the camping out, for I have no experience of that sort of life; but I am willing to risk anything with you and your mother."

"That's a dear!" cried Margaret, laughing gaily. "I knew you could not refuse me."

"And when do you propose to start?"

"The baggage-train and its escort are to set out a week from to-day. We three and Jane will go on the fourth day thereafter. We shall reach the place of rendezvous the same day."

And at the time appointed the three ladies found

the gentlemen and the conveyances, with the servants, awaiting their arrival at the railway station whence all were to start into the mountains. They moved on within an hour, and at dusk had traveled about ten miles. This brought them in full view of the Blue Ridge, at an elevation considerably above that of Cherenden, and into a cool and bracing atmosphere. Eleanor rode with Margaret in the buggy, Margaret driving most of the time. Mrs. Mason and Jane occupied the carriage. John drove the carriage, Josh, riding the near wheeler, managed the four-mule team of the wagon, and Cyrus rode in the wagon. The three gentlemen rode their horses, Huntley riding Delta, Colonel Jenkins his high-stepping Jeb Stuart, and Mr. Vaughn his *Bucephalus*. Toodles varied his mode of travel, riding sometimes behind his master, sometimes in the wagon, but mostly on the box of the carriage beside John.

That night the gentlemen and the male servants pitched two tents near a farmer's house, cooked their own supper, and slept there.

Pressing on the next day they passed mountain spurs, and at sunset reached the foot of a mountain pass. Here the young ladies wished to sleep in a tent; but Mrs. Mason insisted that they should take, with her and Jane, the one large spare room "in the loft" tendered by the man and woman of the house by the roadside. They all, however, ate at the camp a supper prepared by Jane and Josh, and sat there in the open air till after ten o'clock. After their own meal, the farmer's family joined them, and asked, according to Margaret's estimate, forty-one thousand questions. But the people were very

hospitable and good-natured, and nothing occurred to mar the enjoyment of any of the assembly except a furious fight between Huntley's setter Nero and his brother, Margaret's dog Guard, on one side, and the mountaineer's three yellow and brindle curs, on the other. The combatants were separated before any one was much hurt, and the curs then "rocked" back into their yard by the mountain boys. The mountaineer had served in the Army of Northern Virginia, which drew him near to the three "stranger men," as his family called them, and caused him to linger by their camp-fire long after the rest of his family and the female travelers went to rest in the house. By this camp-fire the two young ladies sang songs and hymns which delighted the farmer's family. One of the girls, hearing the echo from the mountain side of the last two words in the hymn "I need Thee every hour," said to her mother in an awed whisper, "Maw, the very mounting is a jinin' in with the ladies. I hyeerd it say 'to thee' jist as plain!"

The third day, being Sunday, they did not travel. The next day's journey carried them through the pass and up to the crest of a lofty ridge. Here they all camped that night, not far from a house where they procured milk, some eggs and poultry. They were interviewed, of course, by the family residing in that house—a three-room log cabin with two chimneys built of logs, sticks, and red clay. After the man, his wife, and four small children went away, Margaret had Eleanor read the fifteenth chapter of the gospel of St. Luke, and after that she read the family evening prayers from the Book of Common Prayer. The teacher, casting a glance

over the scene, during these prayers, was deeply impressed with its ruggedness and solemnity. She saw, in the bright, red glare of the two large fires, the nine other persons of their company (for Margaret had the four negroes to join them in the devotions) all kneeling on carpeting, just beyond them two white wall-tents, and at a short distance a third tent placed between the vehicles and the horses and mules, which stood plain in the fire-light, tethered to small trees. The two large dogs lay in front of the nearest fire. At a short distance stood a steep peak, towering dark and shaggy against the leaden sky. Elsewhere that sky shone with hundreds of bright stars. There was scarcely any movement of the air; and silence brooded over the rocks and forests, save that at intervals, far down the dark glen, a whippoorwill whistled or a great owl hooted. She recalled the frequent manifestations of Himself by the Almighty on mountains—Sinai, Horeb, Pisgah, Carmel, Moriah—and always, except at Carmel, in the absence of crowds. She recollected that the Saviour of men withdrew alone to a mountain, at night, to pray. Such a place seemed to her, now more than ever before, appropriate to His worship, far from the cares, and toils, and struggles of men—a place formed by His own hands, and kept pure from human trifling, human pride, and human defilement.

After that, all went to their several quarters, and the teacher slept so well in the quiet and fresh atmosphere, that from ten minutes after lying down beside her friend she was conscious of nothing till she heard Huntley's voice at the door of the tent, saying:

“‘Envious streaks

Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east:

Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day

Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops.’”

Shortly after breakfast the journey was resumed. Their way was full of interest, winding along deep gorges, on the edge of precipitous cliffs, and on the narrow ridges peculiar to the Blue Ridge chain, at one time bringing them into the silent gloom of dark forests, and at another opening the view of many miles of mountain peaks. The teacher observed that, except in the case of very steep cliffs of rocks, the mountains were clothed with a dense growth of forest trees, which gave those near at hand a somber and mysterious appearance, and smoothed and rounded and robed in rich shades of blue the outline of those in the distance. Their progress was much delayed by a mule casting a shoe, and having to be led about two miles off their line of travel to a smithy. So they failed to make the house near which they had planned to camp, and were compelled to pitch their tents some two miles from any human dwelling. They found, however, a small plateau of open ground, on an elevated ridge, just below which was a bold spring of very cold and sparkling water. As they had an abundance of food for themselves and forage for the horses and mules, they made themselves comfortable. Mr. Vaughn and Toodles rode forward two miles or more, after they established their camp, to procure milk, eggs, butter and poultry. They returned, a little after dark, with a pound of butter, a pint of milk, half-a-dozen eggs, and five small chickens. Mr. Vaughn admitted that he had not a

very pleasant ride, and had a decidedly unpleasant interview with the partly drunk proprietor of the house he visited. "But," he added, "a good woman, the man's wife, came to my aid, and persuaded her ill-mannered lord to furnish, at reasonable figure, these few comforts." And after supper, around the fire, the gentlemen told stories of their soldier life, Huntley relating the circumstances of the death of his friend Harrison.

CHAPTER XXXVI

When the dense fog lifted, the next morning, great masses of clouds were disclosed. Huntley soon said:

"I do not like the appearance of those clouds and the feeling of the air. I fear we shall have rain before long, and a good deal of it. What say you, Jenkins?"

"I'm of the same opinion," answered the Colonel. "I think we'd better move on as soon as we can."

"We are in less than twenty miles of Tallulah Falls, I learned from a mountaineer just now," said Huntley. "It is desirable to reach there, where we shall find shelter, rather than take chances of it elsewhere."

So the morning meal was promptly disposed of, the baggage loaded, and the vehicles started. Huntley rode in advance, to learn what he could of the roads; and after all were well on their way, Jenkins pushed forward, with the same purpose. The road was not bad, for that region, but too rough for rapid progress. The clouds shifted continually, sometimes breaking apart and leaving the sunshine without obstruction. But these intermissions occurred less frequently, and lasted for shorter periods, as the day advanced; and before noon the clouds grew thick and dark, and thunder sounded at intervals. By noon it began to rain with violence. There was no house nor settlement in sight; so they moved slowly on. Neither Huntley nor Jenkins had been seen since early morning. The rain grad-

ually increased, as did the thunder and lightning. The buggy had to be turned over to Cyrus and the four women rode in the carriage. Mr. Vaughn took the downpour bravely and placidly on Bucephalus. Toodles was put into the covered wagon. Mr. Vaughn had two umbrellas turned wrong-side-outwards by the wind, and after that rode, in his high silk hat, without any attempt at protection, frequently assuring the "dear ladies" that the water was pure and refreshing. The storm continued till two o'clock and was so violent as to bring them to a halt for more than an hour, the road being a running stream, and every ordinary stream a torrent. During an intermission of the rain Huntley came to them, riding at a gallop, and drenched with water. He inquired if they had suffered any harm, and added, "I was misled by an idiot of a woman, and rode eight or ten miles out of the way. As I came across the country, mostly by bridle-paths indicated to me by a mountaineer, a terrible storm overtook me. With an inferior horse, I should have fared very badly. As it was, I had to swim three streams. I hope we shall have no further trouble. But, by this road, we must cross a stream, which, ordinarily very small, may be much swollen by the rain. So we must move as rapidly as we can, in order to reach the ford before the flood comes."

The crossing proved to be within half a mile of the spot where he overtook the train. There they found a body of water, about thirty yards in width, rushing down from the mountain heights, and pouring into the lower ravine with a tremendous roar. While they paused, a few yards from the stream, Colonel Jenkins overtook them. His horse was

breathing hard, and both horse and rider were spattered with mud.

"Why, Jenkins," cried Huntley, "you seem to have had a rough ride."

"I should say so!" roared the Colonel. "A fool mountaineer misdirected me, and the Lord only knows how far I have had to ride through the wind and rain."

"My poor Samuel!" murmured Mr. Vaughn.

Huntley tried the ford. Delta waded till the water reached high on her withers, then swam about forty feet, and then waded to the other bank. Huntley turned, and tried the width of the wagonway by moving up and down the stream. During this investigation the mare stepped into a pool that for a moment engulfed her to the tips of her ears, and wet her rider to the waist; but she rose at once, and swam back toward the place she had left. The trials were continued till Huntley satisfied himself concerning the bed of the stream and the depth of the water, then he returned to the others and suggested that they attempt a crossing, because the storm up stream foreboded an increased volume of water, which might detain them for several hours.

He proposed to drive the carriage himself, and mounted the box, saying that John had best wait and help the wagon across, and that Colonel Jenkins would ride in front, to give any assistance needed. The latter assented. Margaret insisted that her mother and Jane should go in the carriage,—and Eleanor also, if she wished,—but that she should drive the buggy. Eleanor urged that she should wait, and go with Margaret. Huntley hesitated, but consented. Colonel Jenkins preceded them,

leading Delta. The carriage floated a few yards, and the water flowed in to the depth of a foot or more; but Oaks and Old Trot breasted the flood bravely, and soon landed the vehicle on the other side. Then the two gentlemen returned, on their horses, to escort the buggy.

Huntley regarded the two young ladies steadily, and said, "If either one of you has any doubt, you would best let Jenkins and me take you across on our horses. We can do it very easily."

"I have no fear, no doubt at all," cried Margaret.

"Nor I," said the teacher.

"It is right hazardous," said Huntley. "That pool below is deep, the current swift, and the fall over the rocks very near."

"We will go!" cried both the ladies.

To the teacher's surprise, Huntley bade Jenkins ride close in front of them, but himself remained at the water's edge, saying some words to Vaughn who sat on horseback at his side.

Margaret drove into the water. The horse, a large, powerful animal belonging to Huntley, moved promptly and steadily, following close after Colonel Jenkins; and the passage appeared to proceed very well. The horse swam after a bit, and rapidly, carrying the buggy pretty straight through the deepest part of the ford, which was not far from their point of entrance. But just as he again touched bottom, he struck a rock, missed his footing, and veered down the stream, taking the vehicle with him. Colonel Jenkins, at some risk, dashed to him, seized his bridle, and strove to keep his head up stream. But the animal lost all confidence at once, and reared, and the current whirled the buggy

down stream. The horse plunged, dragging Colonel Jenkins almost out of the saddle, and broke away from him; and then yielding to the current, he stepped beyond his depth, completely submerging the vehicle and its two occupants. Two sounds Eleanor heard above all the rush of water around her—the near roar of the cataract and shrill screams from the banks. When all around her was darkness, and water filled her ears and nostrils, and her head seemed bursting, she felt lifted and heard a voice say, calmly and decisively, “Do not struggle. Here; hold fast.” And then one of her hands was placed on some object, which she at once grasped. In a moment she saw dimly the light again, and found herself moving. Then the same voice said, “Put down your feet. You can wade.”

When the person with her paused, she realized that she was standing waist deep in water, holding Huntley’s shoulder. A little beyond stood Margaret, supported by Colonel Jenkins.

“By the Lord,” cried Colonel Jenkins as they clambered up the rocky banks, “that was a close call!”

“I was very much afraid that the two horses would drown you, Sam,” said Huntley. “That was a fearful venture of yours—holding to the buggy horse. And when you were swept below him, and plunged into the water after Margaret, I expected you to be trampled and drowned. But let us get the horse and buggy out.”

Then the two waded in to where the horse and vehicle had drifted against some rocks, close to the cataract, and the animal stood trembling and panting. They loosed him from the buggy, and led

him up the bank to where Mrs. Mason and Jane stood. The buggy was afterward landed and moved, though with much difficulty, into the road.

After Mrs. Mason had greeted the rescued girls, the two men, sometimes wading, sometimes swimming, went back to the wagon and those on the other bank, and after a time brought all across, Jenkins carrying Toodles on the pommel of his saddle. His horse had returned to that side as soon as left by his master.

As soon as Mr. Vaughn joined them, he exclaimed, "Aren't they glorious fellows—William and Samuel? Here. Shake hands again," and he shook the hands of his two friends, while tears stood in his eyes. Eleanor had seen him do the same thing twice on the other bank.

"Have you no hand-shakes for us, Mr. Marcus Aurelius?" cried Margaret, laughing.

"Dear me!" exclaimed the little man. "In my admiration of the heroic rescuers I have neglected the charming rescued. My dear, sweet ladies, accept my congratulations."

Then he shook hands with them, with Mrs. Mason, and with Jane. They tied the injured buggy together with ropes and chains, and to supply the place of a broken wheel rested that end of the back axle on a pole which at one end rested on the front axle, and at the other on the ground; and thus mended, they dragged the vehicle by fastening it to the rear of the wagon. The stream was still rising when they resumed their journey after five o'clock, so that it appeared that they had acted wisely in risking the crossing when they did. They arrived at Tallulah Falls a little after sunset, and located

their camp at the distance of about two hundred yards from the inn, on an elevated spot of ground, amid a grove of small forest trees. The ladies and Jane went to the inn, and spent the night there, as Mrs. Mason thought it unsafe for her daughter and Eleanor to risk the exposure of the camp; but all the others ate and slept in camp.

They visited the falls the next morning—Lodore, a succession of rapids, swift, graceful and bright; The Hurricane, a single leap of water over a nearly perpendicular rock; Tempesta, where the whole river plunged sheer over a wall of rock into a narrow basin, with a roar greatly heightened by the confining rock on each side; and finally the Bridal Veil, where, partly on account of obstruction at the edge of the ledge, and partly in consequence of the distance from which they viewed it, the water seemed to break into a spray which waved and shimmered in the sunlight, having much the appearance of a white veil blown by the wind. Eleanor was surprised and delighted.

“Why,” cried she, “have I never read or heard of this place, except when you named it as a point in our line of travel?”

“Then you enjoy it somewhat as I do,” said Margaret. “I wonder that I have heard so little of it. I have known for years that there were falls here; but I have had no reason to think them worth traveling to see. The scenes are positively beautiful, and grand.”

“I never saw anything like it,” pursued Eleanor. “Those rugged, precipitous mountain heights, towering far up on each side of the vast, deep chasm, are a wonderful sight to me—resembling, I imag-

ine, the famous canons of the Northwest. And then this beautiful river, now almost as placid and smooth as a lake, now gliding in ripples over a succession of steps, now plunging straight down, and pounding the bed beneath with deafening roar, now breaking into a volume of spray that floats and waves and sways in the breeze. It is a marvelous combination of grandeur and beauty!"

"I agree with you," said Huntley. "It greatly exceeds any description I have had of it. If this scenery were in the North—"

"If it were in the North," cried Eleanor, taking up the unfinished sentence, "it would be advertised, in one way or another, for five hundred miles around, and would draw thousands of visitors."

"I'm very glad we brought you here," said Colonel Jenkins, cordially. "And I'm glad I came; for I was never here before."

"Nor I," "Nor I," repeated Huntley and Mr. Vaughn.

"I am surprised," said Eleanor, "that any of you should have failed to know of this scenery, so beautiful and so unique."

"You see," said Huntley, quietly, but with a twinkle of the eyes, "we Southern people have some good things that we do not boast of."

"You have some things," cried Eleanor, with enthusiasm, "of which you could hardly boast too much—some men, and some women," and she bowed to the others of the group.

"Sweet lady!" exclaimed Mr. Vaughn, grasping her hand and shaking it.

"Marcus," said Huntley, "you are a genius. But

for that performance we should have had a scene. Aunt Caroline and Margaret were fast getting into tears, and Jenkins was blushing."

"Dear boy!" cried Mr. Vaughn, and then shook hands all around.

CHAPTER XXXVII

They remained at Tallulah Falls several days. Mr. Vaughn attended assiduously on the ladies, and made himself useful as well as agreeable. Colonel Jenkins went once with Huntley and some mountaineers on a deer-drive, and once with Huntley on a hunt for pheasants; but coming home fatigued and empty-handed both times, he took to fishing in the river and loitering about the camp. Huntley, after the first day, did not spend a day with them, except Sunday. He started every morning soon after breakfast, and either rode deer-hunting with the men in the mountains or hunted pheasants on foot, taking his trained setter Nero. Once he brought in four pheasants, once six, and once he brought a large haunch of venison. Sometimes he brought in only two or three squirrels; but he seemed never satisfied to stay in camp, or to be idle, and he was always away till sunset, or later.

Toodles afforded Eleanor much amusement. Arrayed in either his blue flannel suit or in white duck, and wearing a blue cloth cap much ornamented with gold lace, he assumed an air of importance in places. He patronized the mountain boys, and showed little respect for the mountain men, all of whom, men as well as boys, regarded him as quite a curiosity, and asked him many questions.

Eleanor and Margaret, sitting in their room one day, a little away from the open window, heard a native inquire of Toodles who brought him there.

"Well," said he, "I come wid Cap'n Vaughn and Colonel Jenkins and Mr. Huntley."

"But," said the man, "you don't live with all three of 'em, do you?"

"No," answered the boy, "I lives at Cap'n Vaughn's house, at home."

"Well, which one do you wait on?"

"I got more partic'ler charge o' Cap'n Vaughn."

"Well," said another mountaineer, in a jesting tone, "them two is giniwine captain and colonel?"

"Dey sho is," replied Toodles, with decision. "Dey's Confedric officers. An' dey's fighters, I can tell you."

"Which is they?"

"Well," answered the boy, "Colonel Jenkins is him wid de big mustache and de hat tu'n up on de side; an' Cap'n Vaughn ain't so big, an' he got long yaller hair."

"An' t'other one," pursued the man—"what rides the black mar', is he Mr. Huntley?"

"That's him."

"Well, he ain't nothin' but plain Mister?"

"He mought be a gin'ral, ur a jedge, ur a bishop, ef he wanted ter," returned Toodles, stoutly; "but he don't keer nothin' 'bout sich things."

"An' what's your name? Toofer, or Toodler, or what?"

"Oh," answered the boy loftily, "my folks call me Toodles—for fun, you know."

"And what is your name?"

"Well," said Toodles, standing erect and speaking loudly, "my full entitles is George Josephus Abercrombie—ef you will have it!"

"Gee-whillikens!" cried one of the men. "An' whar did yer git that name?"

"Ef you'd read hist'ry books, you'd fin' out!" responded the boy, and walked away.

"Bravo, Toodles!" said Margaret to Eleanor.

From that time they called the little man "with yaller hair" nothing but "Cap'n Vaughn."

Their recreations were few, and those of an unexciting kind. They fished a little, walked a great deal, rode out to two "views" in the vicinity, and conversed or played cards with the few visitors who from time to time spent a day or two at the falls. But the ladies were pleasant company for one another, the mountain air was delightful, their fare and their appetites good, and their evenings by the camp-fire very enjoyable. Then the three old soldiers related many interesting experiences, and Huntley, incidentally, gave them the benefit of his extensive and varied study. These "discursions," as he called them, afforded the teacher accurate and considerable knowledge on many subjects connected with her occupation, for he added to what he had learned from books his own bold, critical thought. Not seldom Colonel Jenkins nodded, and often Mrs. Mason talked aside to "Cap'n Vaughn," while the other three ranged over all sorts of topics; but Margaret and Eleanor were always attentive listeners, and each or both often engaged Huntley in argument, in which, the other two gentlemen said, they sometimes worsted him.

But the experiences of war were to the teacher the most interesting feature of those talks. The men, including Colonel Jenkins, the booster, were disposed to be just and frank, and encouraged her

to ask questions. One evening she asked Huntley what one thing, in his opinion, constituted principally the strength of the Confederate armies.

"The close sympathy among the men in the service," answered he. "And this sympathy—this fellowship—was the result somewhat of a single, common purpose among them, but chiefly of their homogeneousness. In the Federal armies there were men of many tastes, many motives, many theories, many races. About twenty-five per cent were foreigners, mostly South-Irish and Germans. Among the native Americans, the New Englander was, in some respects, unlike even his neighbor the New Yorker or the Pennsylvanian, and very unlike the men of the West. We had, almost only, men of English, Scotch-Irish and French Huguenot bloods, who had become well assimilated by long residence in the same communities. Officers and enlisted men were, practically, of the same blood, were neighbors and friends at home, and usually of about the same social standing. Those things caused the officers to respect the men and treat them with courtesy, and gave the men affection for the officers, and confidence in them. I know that General Hooker, in 1863, attributed the efficiency of the Army of Northern Virginia to our superior discipline. That was true, if by "superior" is meant "wiser" discipline; but it was not true, if he meant more rigorous. From what I saw, and from what I have learned from officers as well as men in the Federal service, their discipline was decidedly sterner than ours; and I think it ought to have been. It is easy to see that men of the same blood, the same traditions, the same purpose, and united by mutual

esteem and respect would cooperate far more promptly, unanimously and heartily than those who were dissimilar to one another and unacquainted with one another. Their personal friendship for an officer would often carry our men with him in the most desperate enterprises; and a gallant sergeant, or a private sometimes added new vigor to a charge, or stayed a disordered line."

"Did that feeling of personal interest operate beyond one's own company, or, at most, beyond a single regiment?" asked Eleanor.

"It held, perhaps always, throughout a regiment, and could be seen, sometimes, throughout a brigade. The troops being usually brigaded by States, there was often some State rivalry which influenced them; but I think that feeling had not a great effect."

"Speaking of the brotherly feeling among the men," said Vaughn, "do you recollect, William, how much our people were affected by the execution of those deserters in 1865?"

"I can never forget it," said Huntley. "It was very creditable to them; but I often wish I could banish that scene from my mind."

"It must have been distressing to witness it," said Eleanor; "and it must be painful to think of it now. But would you mind telling about it?"

"Well," answered Huntley, "it was one of those horrible things which have to be done in war, and—but I suppose I need not refuse to talk about it. Have you ever read Christopher North's description of the execution of the mutinous soldier, in the '*Noctes Ambrosianae*'?"

"Yes."

"This one was far more dreadful than that, and

the author of the 'Noctes' would have pictured it in language to make the blood curdle in one's veins. I have no such gift of description, and therefore shall not attempt to give you more than a suggestion of the features of the scene. Desertions from the lines about Petersburg, in the winter of 1864 and 1865, were much more frequent, and much more numerous, than ever before. Sometimes five or six men, or more, went at one time, either to the enemy or elsewhere. Finally, eleven men of our regiment stole away in the night, to go home, it afterward appeared. Five of them were captured the next day, or the following night, and within twenty-four hours were brought to trial, convicted and sentenced to be shot. There was no doubt of their guilt, and I think they admitted it. One of them was respited on account of his youth, and because it was supposed that he might have been influenced by his father, who was one of the five taken. The next day after the trial the other four were brought out for execution. Now two of the four had been excellent soldiers. One showed, that morning, on his face the scar of a terrible wound received at Gettysburg, where he had been left some time as dead, and he had been wounded more than once. The other had been gallant and faithful beyond the average of even that distinguished command. A third had been a good soldier. The fourth had rather a poor record. They were to be shot by a detail from the same regiment—which has always seemed to me to be not quite just. The brigade was drawn up on three sides of a square, the fourth side being left open for the execution. The condemned were marched, with the two pla-

toons of soldiers who were to shoot them, around the inner side of the square, the troops being in line and facing inward. The band played a dirge as the mournful procession moved. The poor fellows, ragged, mud-stained, pallid and drooping, passed slowly before their comrades, some, or all of them, saying, again and again, the simple words, 'Good by, boys!' I know not if any of their friends spoke; but I saw many a stern soldier pass his worn, soiled sleeve across his eyes, and saw the tears of many. Four stakes, driven deep into the earth, had been placed on the open side of the square. To these, after being blindfolded and made to kneel, the four men were tied, their hands being fastened behind them. At the first volley three of them dropped their heads, and hung limp and motionless from the stakes. They seemed to die without a struggle. The fourth, however—a large, strong man—though pierced in breast and stomach by several balls, and bleeding copiously, writhed and struggled fearfully. The exertion depicted in the Laocoon sculpture is far short of the effort exhibited by that torn and tortured man. He bowed himself for a moment, sinking his knees into the earth, and then, rising up and bending forward, strained every muscle of his powerful arms and legs, till the tight sleeves of his gray jacket seemed about to burst, and the stake shook and bent. It looked, for a time, as if he would rise to his feet and wrench the stake out of the earth. Yet he never uttered a word, or any sound. The whole brigade stood aghast. I saw the brigadier-general (who, under regulation, stood with his staff within a few feet of the spot) shrink back, and lay his hand on the shoulder of his aide-

de-camp. Presently the second platoon was ranged immediately in front of the man. They anticipated the commands, aiming when ordered to make ready, and firing at the word "aim." He received this volley as one of us would a pinch of dust, though I think every ball—the fifty-six caliber Miniè rifle-ball—struck him between his throat and waist, for no one saw the dusty hillside behind him struck. And still he writhed and strained with undiminished energy. Preparation was begun to reload the rifles of the shooting detail; but before this was done two surgeons, on examination, pronounced him practically dead. His efforts slowly decreased, until at last he too hung limp and still from his stake."

"An awful spectacle!" exclaimed Eleanor.

"I saw it," said Vaughn, pale and shuddering; "and I felt faint and sick for days."

CHAPTER XXXVIII

One day Huntley, though restless and ill at ease, stayed at the camp all the morning, looking to the grooming of the horses and mules, and sometimes reading. After an early dinner he took a fishing rod and went away alone, saying that he would go up the river.

Eleanor, too, growing weary of whist, left Mrs. Mason and Margaret at the game, about five o'clock in the afternoon, and taking a book walked out to the cliff that overhangs the Bridal Veil fall. There, seated on the rock, protected by trees from the declining sun, she read and meditated for an hour or more. At length she heard the sound of feet climbing up the height from the river gorge, and before long she saw Huntley, rod in hand, ascending the steep acclivity. He seemed not to see her till within a few yards of the ledge where she sat, and then changed his course, as if to pass by. But he soon turned and came to her. He lifted his hat, and said :

"I thought at first that I ought not to disturb you; but then I thought that you might not mind my resting here a little while. The ascent is steep and rough, as you no doubt found the other day, and I find myself somewhat tired."

"Rest yourself by all means," said she. "You have had a fatiguing walk, if you went above the mill and then came down the river."

"Yes," said he, "I found no fish worth catching

up there; so, thinking I might do better at the pool below the Bridal Veil, I went there."

"Yet caught nothing?"

"Nothing but a catfish and two or three small perch, which I threw back into the water."

They talked in a desultory way for a few minutes, but he seemed preoccupied and uncomfortable. Finally he rose from his seat on a rock somewhat below her, and she rose also. Seeing a small wild flower in a crevice immediately beneath her, she moved, and stooped to pluck it, but in doing so she slipped a few inches. He sprang toward her at once, but she recovered her footing before he reached her, and gathered the flower.

"These rocks are very unsafe," said he, in his usual emotionless tone, "and the cliff becomes perpendicular a few feet farther down. Moreover, there is always danger of giddiness at this height."

"Thank you," said she; "but I have never been troubled in that way, and therefore incur less risk than most persons in walking on such places as this."

"No doubt," returned he gravely. "But the steadiest head will not always supply the need of a safe footing, as you well know."

She turned to retrace her steps, but in an instant she slipped, then she reeled and fell forward. Then darkness and blankness seemed to envelop her. Her next consciousness was of being held closely, and lifted above the earth; and then she heard, as she was borne, she knew not where, a voice crying passionately, "My love! My life!"

Then, when she saw again, she found herself standing on the rock, locked in Huntley's arms, his

cheek resting against hers, and his heart throbbing against her own.

In the first moments she felt only the relief of rescue, joined with a sense of safety and support, and she was content to rest her head on his shoulder and trust to his will. But soon she realized that Margaret Mason's affianced husband was breathing words of love in her ears and clasping her in a passionate embrace. At this thought she recovered strength to tear herself from his arms and thrust him from her.

"Go, sir!" cried she. "I hate you! I command you to leave me!"

He paused a space, regarding her with eyes still bright with excitement, yet full of contrition. Then he said, in great agitation, and with evident difficulty:

"I pray your pardon. In my sudden and overpowering alarm I lost all self-control; and in my joy at rescuing you I was beside myself. Forgive me! Forgive me!"

She remembered afterward that his face expressed profound regret and penitence, and that his voice was sad and pleading. But in her present horror she was incapable of appreciating his emotions.

"Leave me, sir!"

"Allow me at least to help you to a place where you may safely rest," said he with forced composure.

"Go! Let me never see you again!" she exclaimed. "I thought you were a gentleman!"

His face flushed red, and his eyes flashed. Then he grew pale, and quietly said, "You have said

enough. I shall not trouble you longer. I will send some one to your assistance," and turned and walked away.

He must have heard her weeping, for when he had walked a few yards, she saw him halt and turn toward her. But after pausing a few seconds he went on, passing into the thick laurel that enclosed the path.

She soon experienced much pain, and on attempting to rise found herself unable to stand. Then she sat upon the rock, awaiting the help which she knew would be sent her. Soon after she recovered a degree of composure, she heard two female voices rapidly approaching, and in a minute, Margaret and Jane reached her.

"My poor dear!" cried the former, running to her and lifting her in her arms. "I am so sorry. Are you really much hurt?"

Eleanor answered with a burst of tears.

"To be sure. To be sure," murmured Margaret, caressing her. "Your nerves were unstrung by the danger. William would not say much; but I know, from what he said, and the way he looked, that you came near to losing your life, and that he was dreadfully alarmed. Don't talk more than is absolutely necessary. Only lean on Jane and me. I think we shall carry you safely."

"Lord 'a mussy!" groaned Jane. "To think o' one o' my young mistisses gitt'n hu't like dis! It must a' been awful bad, to skeer Mars William so!"

One of her ankles was a good deal sprained, but with the support of Jane and Margaret, Eleanor was helped to the inn, without great effort on their

part, and without much pain to her. There she was put to bed and the usual remedies applied.

Margaret sat with her during the greater part of the evening, and lay on a pallet on the floor, in the same room, at night; but she talked little, and forbade Eleanor to talk much. She came in about eleven o'clock, after sitting half an hour with the others of the traveling party, and said, with some feeling, "I never saw William quite as he is to-night. He is absent, restless, and nervous. It must have been a fearful thing, to have deranged the nerves of two such steady persons."

Feeling that her failure to inquire concerning him would excite suspicion, which she wished to avert, Eleanor asked if he had received any bodily harm, adding that she would be sorry to think that he had suffered in helping her.

"No," answered Margaret. "He seems to be uninjured. Indeed, he stood, for some time, at the camp, discussing with a stranger the prospect of finding mica some miles from here in such quantity and of such kind as to warrant mining. He afterward walked to the inn with the same gentleman, who is prospecting for minerals, and when he returned, just before I came, announced that he had arranged to go, day after to-morrow, for three or four days, with that gentleman and his party."

Margaret slept well on her lowly bed, much to the relief of the unhappy Eleanor; for, with no fear of disturbing her sympathetic friend, she could freely wake, and think, and weep in the darkness. When, at long intervals, she fell into slumber, it was but for a few minutes, and her sleep was fuller of torture than her waking hours; for she dreamed again

and again of lofty precipices and dark chasms, of herself or others dashed to death by falling from immeasurable heights, of men of demoniac fierceness hurling her into the deeps or against jagged rocks, of storms raging, of earthquakes shaking mountains upon her. And in every vision—in the rolling thunder clouds, in the flash of lightning, on the heights, in the depths, on the rushing rivers, in the gloom of forests—there was ever present a face, with chiseled features, broad pale brow and luminous eyes—the face of Huntley. Now it seemed to accuse, now it blazed in wrath, now it beamed with love, now it was sorrowful and full of pity, now it was cold, hard and mocking; but it was always the same countenance, and always distressing to behold.

All the miseries of the hours of waking were preferable to those dreams; but they were periods of infinite pain. Sometimes she doubted the evidence of her senses and the correctness of her memory. Was it possible that a man, so self-contained and self-possessed, so brave, so just, so scrupulous in the performance of his obligations, should at once throw aside all the principles and rules of conduct by which his life had been guided and governed? How could such a man ignore or forget, even for a moment, her claim on his protection, or his duty to his betrothed, or his own dignity and self-respect?

Was he under the influence of drink, or drugs, or disease? No. Was his mind deranged? Certainly no. Was he so alarmed that he spoke words and indulged in acts unconsciously? The evidence was directly to the contrary; for he was strong, his hand never shook, and his language was that of a

man in possession of his faculties. His very words of regret, and his entreaty for pardon, though evincing strong emotion, were spoken in a manner which indicated that he was aware of having done wrong, yet was far from cringing.

She recalled—and for the moment she was conscious of a glow of gratitude and admiration—how he had faced and resisted the opposition of others to her; how he had laid aside his own prejudices, to secure justice to her; how he had sent his kinswoman to tend her in sickness; how deferentially he had borne himself toward her; how fair and considerate he was toward all persons. He was brave, staunch, proud, and though not fond of the society of women, always chivalrous. How could he do as he had done?

She also recalled his affection for his aunt, his care of her business and her comfort, his solicitude for his beautiful and accomplished cousin. How could he be false to her?

Yet these words of passionate love, and that embrace—how could they be explained? He had never shown any special liking of her, any jealousy, any wish to monopolize her, any anxiety to secure her favor, or even her attention. He had saved her, and not Margaret, from the flood of water; but that was because another strong man was already at Margaret's side. He had never visited her, except to communicate some information connected with the school; and always, as soon as he had discharged that duty, he had gone away. Was it possible that he had loved her without showing it? He seemed to avoid her of late, rather than seek her,

for he daily absented himself many hours of the day. Was he struggling with a newly born passion for her? Was he trying to arrange a means of breaking with Margaret? His manner had not indicated such a purpose; for she recalled that he had talked more with his cousin during the last week than usual, and had several times conversed with her for an hour or more, apart from the others. And only twenty-four hours ago she had seen him lay his hand on her shoulder, and rest it there for some minutes—a thing she had never before known him to do, or to do the like of. Men preparing to be “off with the old love” do not conduct themselves in such fashion.

But was it certain that there was an engagement between the two cousins? Her sad heart gave a great bound as this doubt spoke to it. Ah, if it were true that he was not bound to Margaret either by promise or in honor! But that supposition was inadmissible. His friends and her friends had repeatedly spoken of their engagement as beyond doubt. Mr. Williams had referred to it as a fact generally known. Margaret’s near kinswoman, Mrs. Williams, had mentioned it in the same way, and once had expressed her difficulty in accounting for their delay to marry—finally conjecturing that it was caused partly by her delicate health, partly by the disturbed state of the country.

What then brought about his words and actions that afternoon? Was it mere animal passion, excited by contact with her person? And so, sleeping or waking, her mind groped and wandered in mazes of doubt, darkness, and misery, trying many theories and many conjectures, arguing, guessing, speculat-

ing, and always coming back to the one thing so woefully plain—that he had wronged her and wronged the woman to whom his faith was plighted, and to whom she was bound by the strongest ties of gratitude and affection. And when day dawned, she lay broken, weary, and despairing, having concluded that this was only another instance of an honorable and noble man yielding to base impulses.

CHAPTER XXXIX

On the third day after her misfortune, while the teacher, reclining against pillows, was listening to Margaret read, some one rapped gently at the door. Margaret answered the summons, and on opening the door exclaimed:

"Ah, it is you, Mr. Vaughn."

"Yes, dear lady," responded the voice in the passage. "Samuel and I pine for a sight of the fair—ah—sufferer. So we've fixed up a litter—a stretcher, as we called it in the army—so as to carry her out to gladden the camp, if she is strong enough to be moved."

"And is that your 'stretcher'?"

"Yes, dear lady, and we think it a pretty good one."

"And who are to carry it?"

"Samuel Jenkins and I."

"Eleanor," called Margaret, "you must see what Mr. Vaughn and Colonel Jenkins have prepared for you. Can't he bring it in?"

"I suppose so," replied Eleanor.

Then the young man with the long fair hair dragged into the room a queer thing made of cloth and poles, resting on four very crooked legs.

"Isn't it nice?" cried he. "Samuel and I can transport you in safety and comfort. Won't you let us?"

Eleanor had to laugh, and consent.

"That's a dear, sweet creature!" cried "Cap'n

Vaughn," gliding to her chair and grasping her hand.

So he was permitted to call the Colonel; and then Margaret and they two lifted the teacher to the litter. And then, after the arranging of pillows and cushions, the two gentlemen—"Cap'n Vaughn" occupying the forward shafts, and Colonel Jenkins the rear ones—lifted the "vehicle," as the "Cap'n" called it, and bore it and Eleanor down-stairs, out of the house, and over to the camp.

All those there—Mrs. Mason, Jane, Josh, John, Cyrus and Toodles—shouted a hearty welcome as the procession neared them; and Jane cried, "Bless God! Dat Mr. Vaughn done fix it jist as he been wantin' to do."

There was a great deal of laughter, and the three ladies complimented and thanked the Colonel and Mr. Vaughn. The Colonel disclaimed all title to praise, but Mr. Vaughn acknowledged that he was proud of himself.

"Yes, indeed," he exclaimed, "Samuel did good work—more, and better, than I did; but I was the genius who—ah—imagined and contrived the vehicle. And I feel very important, and deserving of praise and thanks. Though," kissing his fingers to the ladies, "it's very sweet to hear you dear ladies express your—ah—appreciation of my—ah—efforts."

So it was merrier now than it had been in the small room at the inn; and, if the stranger was not quite cheerful, she experienced great pleasure in the pure, cool atmosphere of the camp, and in the society of friends so solicitous of her comfort.

At dark the two gentlemen bore her back to the.

inn. The next morning she was again carried to the camp, and spent the day there. She found herself greatly improved by the change.

Soon after sunset, that day, Huntley rode into the camp. It was trying to meet him again; but he relieved her by bowing to her and expressing the hope that she was getting well, and Mr. Vaughn immediately related the history of the litter, telling it with high enjoyment.

"You know, Marcus," said Huntley, as soon as the little man gave him an opportunity, "I have long known, and said, that you are a genius."

"And you, dear boy," returned Vaughn, "are the wise man who—ah—recognizes and—ah—applauds talents whenever and wherever you find them!"

"That's both clever and kind of you," said Huntley, seriously. And then "Cap'n Vaughn" capered around the circle, shaking hands, and protesting that that was the finest collection of people ever gathered together. "And all of us such good friends!" he concluded. Huntley went away to look after Delta; and he did not return while Eleanor remained with them. He was gone the next morning when she was, for the third time, borne from the inn to the camp; and Mrs. Mason stated that they should not see him again until he should meet them on their arrival at the railway station on their way home.

In something less than four weeks after their departure from Cherenden they arrived in the village. It was now September, and the opening of the school about three weeks off. Within a week after her return, Eleanor was surprised by the entrance,

unannounced, of Dr. Thompson into the Squire's library, where she sat alone reading. He spoke at once, in his customary abrupt fashion.

"Don't rise," said he, coming to her and shaking her hand cordially. "I saw you here, and saw no one else. So I came right in. I'm glad to see you sun-burnt. I'd rather see you less thin; but I judge that the trip has done you good."

She thanked him, and said that it had been an interesting one.

"I came to tell you," pursued he, "that I have been elected to a place on the board of trustees of the academy. If you find I can help you in any way, call on me without hesitation. You know I'm your friend."

"I have been glad to think so, for a long time," said Eleanor, earnestly.

"That's nice," cried the old man, wiping his moist forehead. "But I'm not your only friend there. Colonel Tomlinson is one and Cogburn speaks as highly of you as—as he ever did of anybody. So the whole three can be counted on."

The whole three? Where was that other who was heretofore one of the three? The Doctor furnished the answer quickly.

"Yes," said he, "I protested against William Huntley's resignation—you knew he had resigned, didn't you?"

"I had not heard of it."

"Well," continued the old man, "perhaps he mentioned it only to me, till to-day. He's a very reticent man. He was infinitely better qualified for that business than any of the rest of us, and better than any man I know. As I said, I protested against it;

and so did the other two trustees, but he stood firm, giving as his reasons that he lived at a distance, that he sent no pupils to the school, and that he had already served seven years. I didn't like his resigning at all. He's a fine scholar, a practical man, a brave man, and, though his manner is cold and reserved, and sometimes hard, he is as true and conscientious a man as ever breathed the breath of life. I know you'll miss him. He was one of your best friends, and by far the most efficient one."

She felt cold and confused.

"Mr. Huntley is a very capable man," was all she had strength to say.

"I suspect that there is something in his mind," said the Doctor, "which he has not seen fit to disclose. Perhaps his health is not good. He looks bad, very bad. But no sickness ever stopped him before. I don't think his business occupations are in the way. I can't imagine what is the real cause; can you suggest?"

She could only smile faintly, and answer, "You could hardly expect me to know anything of the matter."

The old man fixed his keen gray eyes searchingly on her face for two or three seconds; but then, when she felt herself about to break down, he said: "Of course you are surprised and sorry; and perhaps you fear that he has become unfriendly to you. And such feeling might well put you into the distress you plainly feel. But don't trouble yourself. He fully approves your whole management of the school, and thinks it will do well. So we'll do the best we can. You are right; we shall not do so well as when Huntley was on the board, and you

may well regret his resignation. But we'll do what we can; and I'll tell you—" here he rose and looked her full in the face, and grasped her cold, trembling hand with his own large, rough, brown palm—"I'll tell you, whatever happens, old Ike Thompson is going to stand by you as long as there's breath in his body. Good-by, my dear. God bless you!"

And then he pulled on his weather-beaten slouch hat, and went away, stamping heavily, and blowing his nose so energetically that Cindy came running into the house to see what was the matter.

CHAPTER XL

On the first Monday in October school began. Twenty-one pupils entered at the opening, and there were accessions almost daily for a fortnight, so that at the end of that period there were thirty-two. Jennie Lane came back, bright, merry and affectionate. Laura Cogburn came, in a right cheerful mood. The Lubecks came too; and they were much less sour and arrogant than formerly. Charlie Tomlinson was there—sprightly and full of fun. Little Minnie Haxwell came, looking comparatively well and active. Jake did not come. His mother had kept him home to pick cotton, as was the case with four other farmer boys. With these exceptions, and with the exception of three new pupils, the school was pretty much the same as it had been, both in number and personnel.

The pupils conducted themselves as properly as could be expected, but it was soon manifest to the teacher that they felt the loss of Huntley from the board of trustees, and were curious to learn the cause of his quitting it. For several days, and several times a day, for three or four days, she heard them inquire of one another, and speculate concerning it. Finally, a self-appointed committee of the older ones questioned her. She only answered that she had heard nothing beyond the fact of his resignation. She recognized the reasonableness of their disquietude; for he had been known as the leading spirit of the board, the most scholarly person in the county, and as careful and just as he was brave and

resolute. And the high rank of his family and his own handsome person and graceful bearing added no little to his popularity. His successor was a man of fine intelligence and elevated character, and he was beloved and respected; but with his rough clothing, clumsy figure, and uncouth speech, he could not, in the public mind, be compared with that "combination" and "that form,"

"Where every god did seem to set his seal,
To give the world assurance of a man."

At the end of October, Margaret came, one Saturday morning, and, as usual, accepted Eleanor's invitation to sit in her chamber. Eleanor observed a peculiar expression on her friend's face when she met her, and she saw that it remained for several minutes. It was evident that Margaret had something unusual on her mind. Eleanor apprehended that it was connected with Huntley, and therefore became nervous; but she had educated herself not only to meet trouble as soon as it showed itself, but also to anticipate it when it appeared sure to come. And she knew that frankness was a characteristic quality of her friend, and one which that friend appreciated highly in others. She, therefore, though with much trepidation, invited Margaret to speak frankly.

"You have something to say," said she, "which you do not like to say. Pray speak freely. That will probably be best for both of us, however uncomfortable we may be made for the time."

"Well, dear," returned Margaret, "it is this. Something very serious has occurred with you and William. He has told me nothing, and has declined

to answer the questions I have asked him. Now I want to know of you what is the matter. Perhaps I can assist you in adjusting what has gone awry. Surely, I shall not be so awkward or officious as to increase the trouble. Won't you trust me with the full history of your—disagreement, or falling out, or whatever it is?"

"Margaret," answered Eleanor, "I should hesitate to tell so much to my own mother; but I know you can be trusted to any extent, and in all things. I shall therefore confide to you the whole story—only stipulating that you shall bear in mind that I do this, not because I desire to do it, not because I am even willing to do it, but only because it is your wish and your will to be told."

"I shall be careful to remember that."

Then she related the occurrences on the cliff at Tallulah Falls, and concluded by saying, "I think that is all that need be told."

Margaret changed color more than once during the narrative, but offered no comment, and made no suggestion. She asked one question, at the close of the description, "And did he say nothing more?" Then, pale and somewhat agitated, she sat still, and silent, for several minutes. Then she said, in a low voice, "He must love you very much. Of course the excitement of the occasion hurried him into that strange action and that passionate language; but when a man of his kind is so carried away as that, I think we ought, in bare justice, to exonerate him from all blame. I am very sorry to say it, Eleanor, but I think you were very, very hard to him, and very unlike yourself."

The teacher stared at her in amazement, and for a moment had no power of speech. Then she cried:

"And you condemn me for resenting that conduct on the part of a man whose faith was plighted to you?"

"Plighted to me! What do you mean?"

"I mean that the man who spoke love to me was the man engaged to be married to you."

"And how did you come to know that?"

"No matter," exclaimed Eleanor, "how I came to know the fact. It is the fact that condemns and dishonors him."

"Suppose," said Margaret, "suppose the fact is not true?"

"Not true?"

"It is not true that I am, or have ever been, betrothed to William Huntley. He has never asked me to marry him, and I have never supposed that he ever would. I should be unhappy to think that he ever had such a purpose or such a wish. I should almost as soon think of marrying a brother, if I had one. Am I plain enough?"

Eleanor was dumb for a space. Then she murmured, "I heard it from several persons—from many persons. Almost from the day I came here. I have heard it referred to as a thing generally known."

"Can you recall its mention by any individual in such relation with him or me as to make it trustworthy?"

"Yes. I have had it from your near relation, Mrs. Williams, and have heard her express her wonder why you two were not already married."

It was now Margaret's turn to pause and consider. Then she said, "That sounds strange to me. But I have known the like several times."

Then, after a look at Eleanor's pale face and dazed eyes, she moved to a window, and sat there till the other spoke.

The feeling of horror which possessed the unhappy woman held her silent for a time; but then it broke into expression, almost with a cry.

"And he loved me," she cried, "with an honorable and noble love!—he the proud, wealthy and honored man, and I a penniless, obscure stranger! He risked his life to save mine, and I, the ingrate, infatuated with the idea of my importance, repaid him with scorn and insult! I wish God had let me fall into the chasm, to be dashed to death!"

Margaret ran to her, and folded her in her arms, crying, "Do not talk so, dear. You break my heart. I understand it. Your loyal love for me has led you to act as you did. No doubt I should have felt and spoken as you did, in your place. It was an unfortunate mistake; but you are not warranted in despairing. We will think over the matter, and see what to do."

"There is a solution of the matter," said the teacher. "I can resign the school, go to my home, and relieve the people here from all further trouble with me and my affairs."

"That will never do!" cried Margaret. "You must not think of it. If I have any claim to your consideration, you must hear my protest against any such action."

"God knows," said Eleanor, "that I love and honor you, and that I wish most earnestly to have

you approve of all I do. But what else can I do? What other way is there out of this horrible embarrassment?"

"I cannot undertake to say, at this moment," answered Margaret. "But you need do nothing just now. Let us take a little time to think over the matter. My mind is confused, just as yours is. But in a week or two, perhaps sooner, we shall, I hope and believe, discover what is best to do."

Then she kissed Eleanor and, without further speech, went away.

CHAPTER XLI

The Indian summer, the peculiar possession of the South Atlantic States, has never been painted with any approach to accuracy, because the land where it prevails has not been the home of any landscape artist. When that artist comes he will give the world a different picture from any colored by Claude of Lorraine, or by Salvator Rosa, or by Ruysdael, but one deserving to rank with the best works of any of the three—one without the mellowness of the French painter, without the sharp outlines of the Italian, without the bald gloom of the Hollander, but combining richness and distinctness and strength and sweetness in perfect harmony.

This delightful season in the year 1873 enabled the teacher to endure both her toil and her trouble as she could hardly have done in a sultry summer. It strengthened and refreshed her, and quieted her mind. But one of the chief annoyances at home was the singing by day and by night, of the negroes. In the earlier time of her residence here she had been amused, but after suffering for months the repetition of howls, groans, and whoops, which constituted much the greater part of the performances, and knowing the vagrancy, dishonesty, and utter depravity of these songsters, she experienced only disgust on hearing them.

Cindy made the day vocal with her hymns, piped out in a shrill, piercing treble from which no place or distance afforded escape. And as time went on this singing seemed to grow louder and to become

more constant, until it seemed that she was never silent except in the house. In her own cabin, in the kitchen,—which was forty or fifty feet distant from Mr. Williams's dwelling,—in the garden, in the yard, the screeching went on. Sometimes, at night, she introduced a new feature by having a prayer-meeting in her house, at which some one put up very loud and rapid petitions, and a chorus of voices chanted doleful melodies. The Squire predicted that something undesirable would follow these performances, saying, "Whenever the darkies get particularly religious there is devilment fixing for somebody."

On Friday night the prayer-meeting was very long and animated. The next day Cindy fairly screamed her hymns. One of these she repeated many times during the day, the chorus, as she sang, being:

"I'm boun' fur de promuss la—a—n':
I'm boun' fur de promuss lan'.
Oh, who will come an' go wid me?
I'm boun' fur de promuss lan'!"

She also trilled several times during that day an odd rendering of the old hymn "When I can read my title clear," with the refrain—"I feel like I'm on my journey home"—so stretched out by repetition as to fill a good many bars.

A third piece was one which declared that she would not go to hell with her brother and sister, but inquired if they would not go with her to a better place.

No voice of song or prayer was heard in Cindy's house that night, nor Sunday morning. No Cindy

came to bring the teacher water in the morning. The Squire's wife herself summoned the teacher to breakfast. Cindy and her "man" had departed during the darkness, without warning or announcement, and left Mrs. Williams to prepare the breakfast. The Squire's only remark was, "I suspected that Cindy was getting too full of religion to attend to the worldly business of cooking."

Seeing Mrs. Williams set upon the table a plate of waffles, when the three met in the dining-room, and seeing also the tired look on her face, now flushed by the heat of the stove, Eleanor exclaimed:

"My dear Mrs. Williams, why did you not let me know the situation?"

"Oh, my dear," returned the little woman, "how could I? You are a boarder here."

"This is not my boarding-house, but my home," cried Eleanor. "And I'm so sorry you would not call on me to help you. But I will do it, whether you wish it or not. I'll cook the waffles."

"Oh no! I can't think of it."

"I know all about waffles," continued Eleanor. "They were a new thing to me, so I learned how to make them, and sent the recipe to mamma, who enjoys them as much as I do. You know I have made them here, several times."

"Yes," admitted the guileless lady; "and made them beautifully."

"Now I'll show you what a cook I am. Sit down."

"But, my dear—"

"Mrs. Williams," cried Eleanor, "if I can't cook, I won't eat. I declare I will not eat a morsel unless I'm allowed to cook the waffles."

"But, my child—" remonstrated the lawyer.

"Mr. Williams," said the teacher, looking him full in the eyes, though laughing, "you know I keep my word; and you know I am pretty obstinate."

"So you do; and so you are," returned he, rubbing his chin and looking perplexed.

"Then it's settled. Take your seats at the table."

The two old people looked at each other, and then, yielding, they sat down.

"Say grace," cried Eleanor, with a laugh. "The cook remains standing."

The Squire hurried through his usual form of words; Eleanor snatched up a plate, and hastened to the kitchen, and the thing was done.

Margaret Mason told the teacher, a few days later, that the lawyer in describing the occurrence to her and her mother, added, "And by the Lord, that beautiful, bright, headstrong girl beat both of us and gave us the finest waffles that man ever ate."

The old gentleman and his wife were very grateful to the teacher for the assistance she gave them in what he called their "cookless days," and in a week from Cindy's departure another cook was secured. This person, calling herself Talitha, manifested little interest in religious matters, but she cooked fairly well and stayed at home.

CHAPTER XLII

One afternoon, about the middle of November, when the teacher sat in her chamber, Margaret came to her, bearing a verbal invitation to a tea-drinking at Dr. Thompson's on the evening of the following day. Eleanor instantly began an excuse for declining, but her friend promptly put an end to the effort by announcing that two considerations compelled her acceptance, one of them being that she was expected to meet there two Misses Burnaby, nieces of Mrs. Lubeck who were visiting the village, and the other that it was to be, as she expressed it, a "semi-official function," as the school trustees and their families were among the guests invited, and the Doctor intended to entertain the teacher as handsomely as he could. Margaret concluded by saying, "I shall come for you in my carriage, at six o'clock sharp, and make sure of at least two guests being on time for an informal entertainment."

The two friends, who arrived soonest of all, met, at the quiet little home of the old physician and his meek wife, the Misses Burnaby—hearty, vivacious and handsome young women—and also Mr. Cogburn and his inquisitive, tactless wife; Mrs. Lubeck and her stolid husband, Colonel Tomlinson and his slender, nervous consort; Colonel Jenkins, "Cap'n" Vaughn, Mr. Boller, the singing merchant, and a Miss Agnew. The wife and adopted daughter of the Doctor received the guests, the Doctor having been called to an urgent case out of town.

After some conversation and two duets by the

sisters Burnaby, the meal was served on trays by two smartly dressed young negresses, the guests using small, square, four-legged tables, known in old days as "tete-a-tetes," on account of their being sufficient for only two persons, and otherwise called "quartettes," in consequence of four of them, fitting one into another, constituting a set. These articles of furniture were formerly seen in almost all well-furnished parlors in the South, but are now rarely found except in the lumber-room.

In the midst of the tea-drinking Dr. Thompson and Huntley entered the room together, and abruptly, as if in haste to keep an appointment. The Doctor was in his usual ill-fitting and not very modern or neat garb; but Huntley was in evening dress. All the company started, but none of the others so violently as Eleanor. She had hoped to be spared the trial of meeting William Huntley face to face again, and his tardiness had assured her that she was safe this evening. To her intense mortification, she dropped the spoon in her glass of sherbet on the tete-a-tete with a very distinct rattle. The elder Miss Burnaby, however, who was her vis-a-vis, promptly picked it up and returned it to her, saying, "These gentlemen take no thought of women's nerves. I came very near biting my spoon in two. And I think I bit my tongue also."

Huntley, after shaking hands with Mrs. Thompson and Miss Thompson, and speaking a few words to them in a low tone, came across to where the teacher and her companion sat, bowed to the former, shook hands with the latter, made some excuse for not having called on the two sisters, which Eleanor only half heard, and passed on to the

younger sister, near whom he took a chair, and conversed for some time with her and Vaughn.

Afterward there was more music. Eleanor played a selection on the piano, and sang twice alone and once with Margaret. Mr. Boller performed a bass solo very well, and he and the Misses Burnaby sang several times together. Huntley sat looking out into the darkness through an open window (the evening being rather warm), by which he had remained for the last hour or more.

All the ladies gathered by degrees around the piano, and all of the men gradually collected around Huntley, at the window on the opposite side of the room. After a while Mrs. Thompson informed Eleanor, in a whisper, that one Henry Cranford, living a mile or more beyond Huntley's plantation, had been shot and killed late in the afternoon of that day, and that the Doctor and Huntley had stayed with him till he died. She added that the Doctor had informed her that it was doubtful whether Cranford had committed suicide, or shot himself by accident, or been killed by some other person.

The gentlemen, without intending to be heard by the ladies, spoke more loudly as their discussion progressed. Finally, Eleanor heard Colonel Jenkins say :

"I think Henry was too brave a man to kill himself. He was one of the best in my regiment."

"I took him to be a man of much courage," said Huntley; "but a man of courage may commit suicide. Saul was a brave man. So was Hannibal. So was Mithridates—though he failed of his purpose. So was Marcus Brutus. So was Hugh Miller. So was Frederick the Great, who would, no

doubt, have taken poison if he had lost the campaign of 1756-7. Colonel McClung, of Mississippi, was a very brave man. And there were brave men among the four or five hundred Jews who committed that wholesale suicide at York, in the reign of Richard I, of England. How many of those men were there, Doctor?"

"God knows!" cried Doctor Thompson. "*I* dont. I wouldn't mind if there had been five hundred thousand of them."

At this all the men laughed except Huntley. He did not change countenance, but continued: "It has been generally conceded that the brave spirits in that gathering of persecuted men were those who died by their own hands rather than encounter, certainly slaughter and, probably, torture, at the hands of their besiegers."

"Suicide is a mortal sin," suggested Colonel Tomlinson.

"Shakespeare," replied Huntley, "has Hamlet say that the Almighty has 'set his canon 'gainst self-slaughter'; but I do not find such a prohibition in the Bible."

"It is murder," declared Colonel Tomlinson.

"That is the convenient phrase usually employed to stop discussion," said Huntley. "But self-killing lacks the chief and essential element of that crime—malice; for in taking one's own life one meditates no harm to himself, but a bettering of his condition—at least 'surcease from sorrow,' to use Poe's expression. The sin—if there be any in it—is that of deserting the post of duty to which every one, by being placed in the world, is assigned. That sin is most horrible and dishonorable, when one forsakes

his comrades in misfortune, and leaves them—especially those who are weak and dependent—to suffer alone. And I cannot find any excuse for such a desertion of duty by a Southern man, in the present woful condition of our people. At the same time, I can imagine a very brave man, and a very true one, so wretched and so hopeless as to feel justified in quitting this life, by almost any means except dishonorable ones.”

“Well,” said Mr. Vaughn, “do you think Henry committed suicide?”

“No; there was no cause for it, so far as I know. He was comfortably situated. He was fond of his wife and children, and he was a cheerful person.”

“Is there reason to suspect that some one shot him.”

“I think not,” answered Huntley. “The range of the ball and the powder-burn on his flesh and clothing show that the rifle or pistol by which he was shot was held very close to him, and below his face, for the ball ranged from his lower jaw into his brain. And the flesh and his collar were much burned. So the muzzle of the rifle or pistol must have been close to him, and below his face. Now he was sitting, when shot, on a stump, by the side of the road, not far from his house, as the stream of blood showed. He had a forty-four caliber revolver, which lay on the ground beside him where he was found. Three chambers were empty. I think he shot himself, by accident. But,” continued Huntley, changing his tone, “this is no fit subject for conversation at a pleasure party. Whither were you riding, Mark Vaughn, on Tuesday evening when I met you? You had Bucephalus in a gallop.”

"Oh," answered Marcus Aurelius, "I was hastening to fill an appointment for early tea at Mrs. Hayblow's. Her kinswoman, charming Miss Prewitt, is there."

"Oho! I did not dream that you were 'on pleasure bent'; your face was very serious."

"To be sure," returned "Cap'n" Vaughn. "I was thinking up nice things to say to the young lady."

"For example—"

"Well, I composed a couplet—

"Whoever meets Miss Prewitt
Will encounter very true wit."

"Aha! And you repeated it to her, or in her hearing, of course. And, of course, it pleased her."

"Yes, dear boy. Only she—er—laughed a little more than I thought she need have done. She's such a sharp one that I—ah—don't always feel sure exactly what she means. A keen wit she has."

"'Whose edge hath power to cut,'" suggested Huntley. "Perhaps you have some experience of that edge."

"Ah—well—I don't know."

"Come, come, Mr. Vaughn," interposed Margaret, "you have such an experience; and you must tell us about it."

"Dear me!" cried the little man. "You are so brusque and rapid, Miss Margaret."

"You aren't afraid to tell it, Mr. Vaughn?" asked Margaret.

"Well—ah—I don't know that the fair damsel means all that a—ah—a sensitive fellow might suspect; but—"

"But you have no doubt about one speech of hers,

at least; and if you refuse to tell us we shall suspect that she cut you deeper than you are willing to own."

"Well, then," cried Vaughn, desperately, "if a fellow is to be persecuted, he'd best tell the thing. I don't know, mind you, that she intended to make fun of me; but there was one thing that I couldn't quite understand—because everybody laughed so. It was this way. I described to her the pleasures of this autumn season, and among others bird-shooting."

"Whereby," put in Huntley, "she wished to learn particulars."

"So she did. And I tried to describe."

"Whereby?" continued Huntley, very gravely.

"Whereby I related experiences, and finally told of the only hunt I have had this fall."

"Whereby she wished to know the result?"

"Whereby I told how I found a covey of partridges, flushed them, fired both barrels of my gun, killed none, but fell into a gully, sprained one of my ankles, and limped back home."

"Whereby she said—"

"Whereby she exclaimed, 'Oh, most lame and impotent conclusion!'"

"Well," inquired Huntley.

"Well, everybody laughed boisterously."

And all the company, except the narrator, laughed.

Mr. Vaughn looked from one to another, in bewilderment. At length, as was his custom when embarrassed, he appealed to Huntley.

"Ah—William," said he, "was that meant for sarcasm or—something of that sort?"

"Oh, no, Marcus," answered Huntley. "She only happened to recall Desdemona's words in thinking of your crippled condition after your fall."

"You are a dear boy!" exclaimed the little man, gratefully.

And then no one laughed. It was a little thing; but all of them evidently recognized in Huntley's words and tone of voice that magnanimity which rendered him always the friend of the distressed, and the defender of the one against the many. To the teacher the incident had far more significance than to the others, for it recalled to her that he had befriended her when no other cared, and when he was under no obligation to care, and that, after she had grossly wronged him, he bore the wrong in silence, and retired from his position of authority in order to relieve her of embarrassment. And she could never repay his kindness, nor ever undo the wrong she had done, nor ever make atonement!

In driving to her lodging, Eleanor observed that a roof had been erected over the formerly black walls of the burned Episcopal church, and inquired about it.

"Yes," said Margaret, "we put workmen on it just before we started on our mountain excursion. It is now covered and floored; and we hope to have pews, chancel, altar and the other necessary furnishing placed, within a fortnight or so."

"You told me nothing of it," said Eleanor, hurt at being ignored in the restoration of a church where she would be expected to worship, and intending that Margaret should know it.

"Well, my dear," returned Margaret, in her usual frank, simple manner, "some of the members

thought that you ought to be told, and invited to contribute to the expense; but mamma and I thought, and said, that it would not be quite fair to you, and that we should tax you heavily enough in having you hereafter to assist in paying a rector's salary and other expenses of maintenance. For the same reasons—or rather one of our reasons—we have not called on several of the congregation. Indeed, mamma, William, Colonel Tomlinson, Colonel Jenkins, Mr. Lubeck, and I are to pay the cost of the repairs.”

“I should have been glad to help, to the extent of my ability,” said Eleanor, endeavoring to show no annoyance.

“Of course. We all knew that. You know, don't you, that however other persons might feel about it, mamma and I would never have consented to anything, by commission or omission, that involved slighting you?”

“Yes. I am glad to feel sure of that.”

“Well, then, you are not to feel slighted, you dear, proud, sensitive thing!”

“Well, I must not, and shall not,” cried Eleanor, as bravely as she could. “And I beg your pardon for using a word or tone of complaint. But you know—I—I am very foolish of late.”

Margaret could not see the tears that came to the teacher's eyes, but she heard them in her voice, and promptly caught her in her arms, saying, as she held her face against her own, “You must not talk that way, nor feel that way, my sweet Eleanor. Nothing is too good for you; and if you will only keep a brave heart, and endure your trouble, for a season, you are sure to come to peace and serenity

of mind. God will not suffer one to suffer long for a single honest mistake, especially when one's action is the result of heroic loyalty to a friend. Would it do you any good, dear, to know that I pray daily and nightly, and many times in a day, and in every waking hour of the night, for your welfare and cheerfulness of mind? My faith tells me that those prayers—though you deserved them far less than you do—will not utterly fail.”

“God bless and reward you!” sobbed Eleanor, surrendering herself to that indulgence in weeping which is often not merely the alleviation but the luxury of woe. When they parted, she was able to say, “I think I shall rest better to-night than I have rested for weeks; for waking I shall feel enveloped in your prayers, and I shall hear in my dreams the music of your voice making intercession for me.”

CHAPTER XLIII

The violent death of Henry Cranford caused excitement in the village and in the adjacent country, as the teacher found on entering the public square the following afternoon. She saw in the open square and on the sidewalks a considerable number of white men, most of whom talked with earnestness, and also a good many negro men and women, who spoke to one another in low tones, and looked angry and sullen.

Both gatherings being just beyond the Cogburn store, she thought it advisable to enter there, to do the shopping for which she came. She was told by one of the clerks that this coming together of persons of both races was supposed to be the result of the arrest and temporary confinement in the village guard-house of a negro named Alf Goode, charged with the murder of Henry Cranford.

After making her purchases, she seated herself on a stool near the door to wait until the excitement was over.

Presently William Huntley rode among the white men who were nearest the store, and said, not loudly, but distinctly:

"Surely you men of intelligence, always loyal to the law, do not purpose to interfere with the operation of the law in this case."

"Who said anything about interfering with the law?" inquired a man, in a surly tone.

"Abram Giles, I do not have to be told. I know that men in this crowd are discussing whether they

shall intercept the deputy sheriff and his prisoner, on the way to the railroad station, and lynch the prisoner."

"I'd like to know how you know so much," said another.

"Caleb Perkins, do you imagine I have no information concerning the matter, or that I cannot put two and two together?"

"Nobody ain't teched Alf Goode, nor done nothin'," cried a third.

"That kind of talk isn't worth a cent," cried Huntley, impatiently. "Probably no one in this crowd intends to be present when the deed is done. I presume that it will be the work of other men, who will be masked, and otherwise disguised. But some of you are to notify them when the officer and prisoner leave here, and of the road they take to the station; for there are, you know, three ways to that point. Your plan might have succeeded, if you had not let too many into the secret. But you, fortunately, were imprudent, and the result is that you have a crowd here expecting the tragedy."

"I never knowed nothin' 'bout it," cried a fourth.

"I believe you, Adam Hartman," returned Huntley. "And I do not think that you would take part in such a crime if you could prevent it."

"That nigger ought to be hung, or shot," exclaimed a rough, large, untidy man. "He's murdered Henry Cranford; an' they'll git a nigger jury an' a radical jedge to try him; an' he'll come scot free."

"If your prediction is correct," said Huntley, "that does not warrant the murder of the man; and

all of you know as well as I, that lynching is always murder."

"I don't know what business it is of yours," shouted a fellow at some distance.

"But I'll make it my business. Men of this county shall not violate the law, and commit murder, and bring shame and trouble to the community, if I can prevent it. Where is Joe Atkins, the deputy sheriff?"

A large, fat, awkward man, who seemed to have been sitting on the ground near the front door of the store, now stood up, saying:

"What do you want with me, Mr. Huntley?"

"I want you, and I charge you, to take care that your prisoner suffers no harm between this place and the county jail. You are bound to defend him, at the peril of your life."

The man looked confused, and mumbled, "I dunno what to do."

"Confound you!" shouted Huntley. "You're as great disgrace to the State as the vilest carpetbagger that ever robbed it. You scalawags are the worst of all, anyhow."

This angry speech pleased the men; most of them laughed and some cheered. Eleanor saw that Huntley had not expected that result, and was somewhat disconcerted.

"Joe Atkins, I demand that you take measures to meet the violence threatening your prisoner," he continued. "You are perfectly aware of the danger before you in attempting to carry him to jail. You cannot face it alone. One resolute man could take him from you. You must summon a posse to defend him."

"Who'll serve on a posse with me?" growled the man. "I can't git nothin' but niggers; an' they ain't gwine to stand."

"Suppose you summon me," said Huntley.

"You! Good Lord!"

And several in the crowd echoed the last two words.

"Yes, me."

"Well, then, I do," said Atkins, with a very foolish look, and in a very weak voice.

"Good!" cried Huntley. "Now; my friends, you know exactly what is ahead of those who attempt to lynch Goode, or if there is any sign of violence on the way. Well, Atkins, shall we start?"

All faces were very serious, and there was a profound silence. Huntley alone appeared to be at his ease. To the teacher he was handsomer and greater than she had ever seen him, and his chief beauty was the calm expression of his face—the face of one performing a dangerous duty, unconscious of any merit in so doing, and as indifferent to men's admiration as he was to the danger.

Atkins was silent. He looked one way and another, shuffled from one foot to the other, drew from a pocket a large piece of tobacco, bit off a quid, chewed it, spat on the ground, and then gave a loud, deep, long-drawn sigh.

"Well!" said Huntley, moving his belt a little forward, and showing the butt of a Colt's repeater in doing so.

"I'm obleeged to you, Mr. Huntley," returned the deputy. "But I ain't ready to start jist now. I'll let you know when I git ready to go."

"Now, Joe Atkins, I want you to understand me, and to know your own duty. I have offered to assist you in enforcing the law; you have accepted my offer, and put me on your posse. I am ready to remove the prisoner; you tell me that you are not ready, but will let me know when you are. If you make the pretense of carrying that man to jail, in my absence, and he is killed or injured on the way, I shall not only prosecute you, but I shall use every effort to disgrace you with your party and with both races."

"'Fore God!" exclaimed Atkins, "I'll do as you want me."

It was evident that the one brave and conscientious man had prevailed. The crowds dispersed in a few minutes, without further public demonstration, and there that matter ended.

It was hoped, and thought, that Alf Goode would be carried to the county jail at once, and that, whatever the legal authorities might do concerning him, there would be no further trouble in Cherenden. The teacher, therefore, felt safe in accompanying Mrs. Williams, on the morning of the next day, Saturday, on a shopping tour. They saw a large number of negroes, of each sex, about the square, but recollecting that Saturday always brought many of them to town, they paid no attention to the crowd. At length, when about to leave Mr. Boller's dry-goods store, that gentleman suggested that they be careful to guard against contact with the negro women, because the women, always more insolent and aggressive than the men, were in high excitement over the proposition to take Alf Goode from

custody. Eleanor said that they had supposed that the prisoner had been removed to the county-seat.

"He has not," said Boller, "but is still in the village guard-house. Joe Atkins got drunk soon after the row yesterday, and hasn't been seen in public since. I think that the negroes feel sure that he will not resist a rescue, and suspect that he keeps the man here to give them the opportunity."

The merchant's advice came rather late; for the two ladies had not reached the limit of the square when the dusky mass in front of them, on some unseen impulse, surged over the pavement and completely occupied it. On the advice of a white citizen they retreated into the shop of Abram Schwanzenberg, a Jew, whom they found so excited that he was hardly able to inquire if he could sell them "somedings." A multitude of voices soon made manifest the purpose to rescue Alf Goode, some because otherwise he would be lynched, some because he was innocent, some because his arrest was the result of "devilment," as they called it, of his white enemies. Mrs. Williams pointed to a large, ill-dressed, ill-featured white man in the crowd, saying, "That is Zeke Taylor, William Huntley's enemy, and a leader among the negroes." And then she indicated a tall and rather dignified negro, who was well dressed, and spoke with authority, whom she described as full brother to Mrs. Mason's butler Scipio, and holding the office of county commissioner.

Schwanzenberg's store was at the northeast corner of the open square, and its side windows looked out on a street, running eastward, which led to Squire Williams's residence, and though only thir-

ty feet wide, including the sidewalks, was one of the main thoroughfares of the village. The guard-house was on this street, about eighty feet from the square, and opposite the back end of the store. On looking through a side window, Eleanor saw that this street, down to and beyond the guard-house, was filled with people, among whom she perceived no white faces. The village lockup was held by the two town marshals, not as a guard over the prisoner, but for the protection of the village property.

Presently she recognized the strong, deep voice of Colonel Jenkins, and looking toward the entrance of the street, saw the Colonel seated on his tall horse Jeb, the rider's face very much flushed, and his horse wet with perspiration.

"What do you rabble mean by raising this noise and blocking the street?" he cried angrily. No one answered.

"I hear," continued the horseman, "that you are fixing to rescue that buzzard Alf Goode. Give up that fool project, and behave yourselves."

The crowd was silent.

"Where's William Huntley?" cried the Colonel. "He and I can clear up this crowd without any help."

"Here he comes!" shouted a white boy.

In two or three seconds Huntley joined the Colonel. Eleanor observed that Delta was flecked with foam and breathed hard.

"Good morning, Colonel Jenkins," said Huntley. "Can't you persuade these people to get about their business? I hear that some lawless fellows talk of taking Alf Goode out of the hands of the law.

Alick Mason," continued he, addressing the tall negro, "you ought to have sense enough, if not enough decency, to stop this thing—as you can."

"I ain't got nothin' to do with it, Mr. Huntley," replied the negro sulkily.

"Well," cried Huntley, "whether that's true or not, you'd best stop this crowd. Somebody will be hurt, if this thing goes on, and it may happen that you yourself will get a rap."

The voice in which these words were spoken and the flashing eyes of the speaker, convinced many of the mob that there was mortal danger in their undertaking, and a score or more of those near Huntley edged back into the open square.

"Why, Mars William," said an old negro, taking off his hat, and bowing obsequiously, "you said yo'-se'f as how Alf wa'n't guilty. An' we all seen you protect him yistiddy."

"Tom," returned Huntley, "you know very well that Alf's guilt or innocence has nothing to do with this matter. He is in the hands of the law, arrested by the deputy sheriff in pursuance of a warrant issued by a magistrate, upon the oath of a citizen."

"Well," said Tom, "it's 'twixt de deputy sheriff, Mr. Atkins, and we all."

"Not at all. Joe Atkins represents the law of the land, and has no personal duty or authority. Where is Atkins, by the way?"

"Dar him," cried another negro, pointing across the street.

"Oho!" shouted Colonel Jenkins. "Here you are at last, Joe!" The deputy now straightened his huge, fat body, and answered:

"Yes, I am. What have you got to say about it?"

"I've got this to say," roared the Colonel, "that you are d—d cowardly sneak; and I wish to God you'd give me a reasonable excuse for breaking your head!"

The intendant of the village—for it was incorporated, and had its municipal government—now came pushing his way from the guard-house. His name was James Thurber. He was a young man, but a veteran Confederate soldier.

"Well, Mr. Intendant," said Huntley, half laughing, "I'm glad to see that you escaped asphyxiation in that odoriferous mob about the lockup. What can we do to help you?"

"I have been holding the guard-house," answered Thurber. "It is in no danger, I think, since the marshals and I clubbed five or six who tried to force an entrance. But these people still block up the street."

"Do you want the way opened?" asked Huntley, with a peculiar smile, which of itself caused the negroes near him to move from the driveway.

"Yes, I do."

"Well, you can appoint a special police, I should think. You might see fit to put Colonel Jenkins and Tom Jernigan and me on that work."

"Good!" cried the intendant. And then he shouted, "I appoint William Huntley, Samuel Jenkins, and Thomas Jernigan special policemen to clear this street."

Immediately Huntley snatched a heavy riding-whip from a white man on horseback near him, Colonel Jenkins took a walking cane from a white man on foot, and Jernigan grasped by the end a bludgeon already in his hands, and then the three

moved forward, the impatience of Delta carrying Huntley in advance of Jenkins and Jernigan.

The crowd just in front of them, with the exception of four loiterers, retired promptly to the sidewalks. These four Huntley touched lightly with the tip of his whip, saying, "Get out of the way; you heard the order!"

The men retired. But behind them, at the distance of ten or twelve feet, stood a dense body of negroes, with Zeke Taylor, the white man, and Alick Mason, the negro, in front.

"Give way!" cried Huntley.

"Go to hell!" shouted Taylor, drawing a pistol.

In an instant Huntley spurred Delta forward, and in another instant, while Taylor dodged the animal, he rained blows on his shoulders and arms with the whip. The man dropped his pistol, and turned to flee, but in doing so he fell. Huntley took care to hold his horse off him, but as the fellow scrambled on all-fours toward the sidewalk, he plied him with all the force of that right arm whose power Zeke Taylor had twice before experienced. The spectacle of this creature, not daring to use his weapon, but crawling on hands and knees in abject terror, so amused Huntley that he burst into a loud ringing laugh, and held his hand while the man was still in his power. Even the negroes saw the ludicrousness of the scene; and many of them laughed.

"Gosh!" exclaimed one of them. "Mr. Huntley mos' cut his clo'es off!"

"Lord, yes!" said another. "I done got outer de way o' dat man soon's I seed him a-comin'."

At the same time that Huntley encountered Tay-

lor, Colonel Jenkins found the negro Alick barring his way, and flourishing a stick. The Colonel called to him to "clear the track!" but the negro caught his bridle reins and struck at his horse's head. With a fearful oath, the veteran Confederate *sabreur* warded off the stroke and in an instant, though at the disadvantage of striking to the left, dealt the negro a sounding blow on the head. The man reeled, but struck out again viciously and vigorously, bruising the horse's neck. Jenkins turned his horse so as to have his adversary on his right, and then brought down his heavy hickory stick on the negro's hatless head, with all the strength of his long, powerful arm. The man dropped senseless to the ground, and was dragged by his friends to the sidewalk.

Thomas Jernigan, who was a very kind-hearted man, was reluctant to exert his mighty muscles on the crowd, and contented himself with tapping those in his reach just enough to remind them of the force which would be used when necessary. All within the swing of his bludgeon profited by the warning, and gave back to the sidewalk, except one large, hideous, ragged, filthy fellow, who cursed the farmer and called him "poor white trash," and added a foul epithet. Then the farmer spurred his mule to where the negro stood, beat down, as if it were a straw, the negro's upraised club, and laid the man low with a blow that would have stunned a rhinoceros.

At this moment, while the wildest disorder prevailed in the mob, ten or twelve pistol shots were fired in rapid succession. Mrs. Williams screamed, and dropped, half swooning, upon a chair, and Eleanor left her position at the window to attend to

the needs of the terrified woman. So she saw nothing in the street for some minutes. What she heard was cries of "Charge 'em! Charge 'em!" and following them a wild, shrill yell of many voices, and then a rush of feet down the street, past the guard-house, and finally ceasing altogether.

Pretty soon Mr. Schwanzenberg came up, smiling and rubbing his hands and announcing that the negroes had run away, and the ladies would not be troubled further.

When the two ladies returned to the street they found it very quiet. A few negroes loitered lazily about the sidewalks, and some white men chewed tobacco and gossiped at the corners; but there was no crowd and no evidence of the morning's riot. It was ascertained pretty soon that no one was killed and none permanently disabled. Alick Mason had to keep his house for a fortnight, and Tom Jernigan's adversary's condition was critical for a time; but there were no reprisals, and no prosecution. Joe Atkins, with a guard of soldiers, took the accused man to the county jail.

CHAPTER XLIV

"Well," said Margaret Mason, after a talk of some length with Eleanor Field, on a day in December, "we won't discuss your resignation of the school any more just now. You promise that you will not resign until further conference with me?"

"Yes."

"And you'll try to tell me frankly—by which I mean freely—everything that comes to your mind?"

"I promise."

"Then I promise to help you all I can—which, though bad English, means good friendship. In the mean time,—as I would have told you long ago, if you hadn't met me with that sad face,—I want you to join me in recreation. One Jeremiah Wakeup—a good name for a fox-hunter—is to come over to-morrow, Friday, from the adjoining county of Bertlon, with his celebrated pack of ten thoroughbred English foxhounds, to compete in a fox chase with the best hounds that Colonel Jenkins can muster. He is Colonel Jenkins's guest. Colonel Jenkins has six fine dogs, Colonel Tomlinson four. These ten are to be matched against the challengers. Colonel Jenkins is wild over the contest, and has made me promise to come and bring you. Have you ever ridden in a fox-hunt? No? Well, then, you must come home with me to-morrow afternoon, and go with me the next morning. The horses, Oaks and Ruby, are in prime condition, and I think I can promise you an exhilarating ride."

So Eleanor went to Oak Hall Friday, and on

Saturday morning she was aroused before daylight by the blast of a horn and the furious barking of Guard.

In the dining-room she found Margaret, already attired in hat and riding-costume. They took coffee and some cold food; and then, after the teacher put on her habit, Margaret led the way to the front gate, where the two horses struggled with their grooms.

As they walked, Eleanor felt—unaccountably to her—a desire to ride Ruby, and said so to Margaret. Margaret paused, and seemed to reflect. Then she said:

“I would rather you should not. Ruby is vicious as well as wild. He might be dangerous, in a fox-chase, to the best rider.”

“I have no fear of him.”

“I suppose not, but he is hard-mouthed, and has a trick of taking the bit in his teeth which gives him the advantage of any but a powerful hand. I ride him with curbs which would render almost any horse powerless; but even with any of these, he sometimes escapes my management, and gets such possession of the bit that, his jaws being stronger than my arms, he runs away with me.”

“I have no fear,” repeated Eleanor. “And I wish to ride him to-day.”

“Very well,” said Margaret, slowly. “But try to guide him—and to keep your head—when he bolts.”

Thomas Jernigan, who had blown the horn, was at the gate, on his tall mule, for the purpose of escorting them to the place of rendezvous. After some controversy between the grooms and the horses, the two ladies mounted. Then the three rode rapidly through the morning twilight, Ruby

champing his bit and bearing so hard on it as to strain his rider's arms. After going a mile or more, Margaret said:

"Won't you change your mind, dear, and ride Oaks?"

"No, dear," returned Margaret. "I think I can ride Ruby."

Just as day began to dawn through a great mass of broken clouds of crimson, gold and purple, they drew rein, in front of a farmhouse, where a company of men, women, horses and dogs were gathered. Among these were seen Colonel Tomlinson, on his large, strong, dappled-gray horse Traveller—so named for Gen. Robt. E. Lee's war-horse, and his name spelled with two *l*'s, because General Lee so wrote his horse's name. There was Colonel Jenkins, bestriding his tall, slender bay, Jeb Stuart. Mr. Vaughn sat smiling on his gaunt steed Bucephalus. Mr. Boller rode a fiery little brown mare, which bit or kicked everything in reach. The Misses Burnaby were there, prettily mounted, and looking very fresh and cheerful. The challenger, a man of medium stature, with closely-trimmed reddish beard and hair, and a ruddy, jovial face, sat on a slender sorrel horse.

"I hope we haven't detained you," cried Margaret, as soon as greetings were exchanged.

"You have not," answered Colonel Jenkins. "Huntley has not come; and I think Miss Prewitt and her escort, Mr. Tagworn, are just coming up the hill."

When that gentleman and lady joined them, Margaret said, "You need not wait for William, Colonel

Jenkins. He did not promise to come. And if he comes, he will soon overtake us."

Colonel Jenkins then blew softly the great horn suspended from one of his shoulders, adjusted his broad-brimmed hat, pulled his waxed mustache, and led the way. The cavalcade, with the accompaniment of twenty barking, jumping, and quarreling hounds, moved a short distance along the highway, and after that entered a wide expanse of uncultivated field, partly overgrown with broom-sedge, partly occupied by growths of stunted old-field pine, and much seamed with gullies whose sides glared red in the light of the rising sun.

They halted on arriving at the summit of a hill which commanded a view of fields, woodlands, meadows, and swamps for miles around them. Huntley joined them here, looking pale and tired.

"Hello, Huntley!" cried Colonel Jenkins, loudly. "I was afraid I wouldn't have a chance to run Jeb against Delta this morning."

After the greetings, Huntley described the hills, hollows, streams, ridges, and roads, and the distances between points, with such clearness, that the teacher almost saw a map before her. Then he called to Mr. Wakeup, and the two, taking the latter's ten hounds, rode down the slope, crossed the stream at its foot, and ascended the opposite ridge. The remaining ten dogs of Colonels Tomlinson and Jenkins were now harked forward, and went at a gallop over the ground on the near side of the stream, while Mr. Vaughn, Mr. Boller, Mr. Tagworn, and the ladies moved into a road which ran about parallel with the stream.

Before long a dog on the farther—the south—

side of the creek gave tongue. Most of the two packs joined in promptly, and followed, for half a mile, a trail along the lower part of the ridge. But they seemed to lose the scent after that, and the ladies and their escort rode leisurely along the road, awaiting a resumption of the chase. And so they rode for fifteen or twenty minutes, when the hounds began to bay, and to follow, faster and more eagerly than before, the trail of game. At one time the cry of the twenty pursuers became wild and rapid; and the ladies simultaneously gave rein to their horses, and moved along the parallel road at a brisk gallop. Ruby was hard to hold and rough in his gait. But after receiving some discipline from the whip, administered on Margaret's urgent advice, and after a short run, he became more tractable, though never ceasing to bite the bit. Margaret twice proposed to change mounts with Eleanor, but Eleanor was unwilling. In making the offer the second time Margaret added:

"He is a dangerous animal to any stranger. William himself says so, and protests against my riding him, but he is safer to me than any one else, because he knows me."

"Margaret, dear," answered Eleanor, "I wish to ride this horse to-day; and I can ride him."

Margaret looked into her face for a moment, and then said, with a sigh, "I suppose I must let you have your way."

The ride was becoming somewhat dull, when a sharp, wild bay of a hound on the distant ridge was heard. In a few seconds, other tongues joined, and the whole of the two packs were in full cry, racing up the ridge, then passing to a plateau beyond.

"They've jumped him! By the Lord! they've jumped him," shrieked Mr. Vaughn, belaboring Bucephalus with his whip. "Ride as you can to the next cross-roads, and then go to the left!"

Every one now hurried forward. Ruby tore along at a run, outstripping all his companions except Oaks, who kept about a neck's length behind the racer, covering the ground with long, rapid strides, and with an ease which the teacher, despite the engrossing employment of holding her horse, observed with interest and admiration. Then down the ridge they clattered—a stony way, and dangerous to riders of less sure-footed animals than those the two friends rode. In a few minutes Margaret said, "Let us stop to listen. I think the chase is coming this way."

It was soon evident that the hounds were bearing across the line of their riding, apparently pursuing a curve. The sound gradually increased, and from their position on an elevation overlooking a wide stretch of fields they saw, before long, the whole pack racing through open ground with a clamor that recalled to Eleanor the familiar phrase, "making the welkin ring." For nearly half a mile they ran in full view, the foremost dog being only about two hundred yards from the rearmost. Close at their heels followed Colonel Jenkins and Huntley, almost abreast, and a little behind them rode Mr. Wakeup and Colonel Tomlinson.

"Colonel Tomlinson rides well, for a man of his years and weight," remarked Margaret—"sixty-one years old, and balancing the scales at exactly sixteen-and-a-half stone, egad!"—imitating the Colonel's self-satisfied tone.

The chase ran thus till it stampeded a herd of thirty or forty cattle and some goats, which were pasturing close to a collection of farm lots and buildings. Then the dogs lost the scent and, after a general pause, began to circle. The other ladies, and Mr. Boller, Thomas Jernigan, and Mr. Vaughn now came up from the right, they having followed the shorter line.

The hunters, as well as the dogs, were confused. Mr. Wakeup took three or four of his hounds, and rode to and through the running flock of cows and goats, his conjecture being that the fox, hard pressed, had taken refuge among those animals—as the fox often does. But the dogs found no scent. Colonel Jenkins rode into the farm lots, blowing his horn, hallooing to the dogs, and making much clatter among the farmer's poultry and curs.

Huntley took no part in the efforts of either of those gentlemen, but sat still on his horse, talking with Jernigan. After the two explorers returned, he said, "I think, with Mr. Jernigan, that this veteran red will not be caught in a barn or a cowshed. Only nervous vixens and inexperienced cubs end that way. Yonder is a rail fence, dividing the turnip-patch from the woods. The fox ran into the herd of cattle, so as to conceal his scent; then he crossed the cowpens and stable yards, then—Mr. Jernigan and I surmise—he ran along the top of that fence for two or three hundred yards. Let us follow the fence."

Though neither Mr. Wakeup nor Colonel Jenkins endorsed Jernigan's theory, they yielded, and after much difficulty with the hounds, all of which insisted on harking back to the field where the trail

had been lost, they carried forward three or four dogs. They followed the fence for two hundred yards, and the dogs also beat on both sides of it. Several times one and another of the hounds lifted his nose in the air and took the wind, but not one gave tongue.

Finally, Colonel Jenkins cried, "This won't do. There's no fox here," and turned back toward the farm lots.

Jernigan and Huntley coaxed a young dog of Colonel Tomlinson's kennel to go with them, and then they rode on. In a minute, and at about a hundred yards from the point where Mr. Wakeup and Colonel Jenkins and all the others had turned back, this dog struck a scent, opened with almost a shriek of excitement, and dashed through the woods at full speed.

This brought forward all of the two packs of hounds and the whole cavalcade of hunters; and soon the hunt was riding hard, every one for himself, through the thick woods, following the clamorous chorus of twenty hounds in headlong chase.

Eleanor's horse soon broke from all control, and raced through undergrowth, brier patches, and pine thickets at a speed that bewildered her, and often rendered it doubtful if she could stay in the saddle. Forest trees, fallen logs, chinquapin thickets, vines, open spaces of grass-grown field, clumps of old-field pine, gullies, sand beds, small streams, stagnant pools of water, fences, rocks, seemed to meet and fly past her. She lost all hearing of the hounds in the rush of air, the swish of foliage, the clatter of the horse's hoofs, and his hard breathing.

Once the animal paused so suddenly as to throw her forward, almost over the horns of the saddle, and she saw a high rail fence immediately before them, and hoped the mad race was ended. But, the next second, he rose and leaped like a deer, clearing the obstacle without touching it. At once the wild speed was continued, despite her efforts to curb him when he touched the earth. And on they went through a thicket of old-field pines, both horse and rider receiving sharp wounds from limbs and needles. Again he stopped. Now she saw through the mist that filled her eyes a great chasm, with large rough rocks cropping out along its sides. He reared, propelled himself forward, and landed his fore-feet and body on the farther bank, his hind-feet falling just below the edge. For an instant he gave way and began to slide down the bank, but his great strength and will were equal to the emergency, and he struggled up and forward till all four feet were on the level ground. Now she hoped to hold him in, but hardly was he well on his feet before he dashed forward.

Eleanor began to despair, and her strength was almost exhausted. She ceased to see, or scarce care, where she was, and only sat in the saddle and held the reins in a dazed way, obeying that unreasoning instinct that leads a drowning man to cling to the smallest plank and, literally, to catch at any straw that floats to him. After a time she felt that the animal was plunging through the deep, soft sand or mire; and at length he stood still, mired up almost to the knees in a willow bog that lay between two open ridges of gullied old field. It was not difficult to guide him thence up the ridge on the same side of

the small stream that ran through the hollow. When she reached a sufficient elevation to have a view of her surroundings, she drew rein and looked about her, while Ruby recovered breath. At first it was beyond the capacity of her tired, bruised, brush-beaten eyes to see much, but after a little exercise her vision extended over a large space, and she was able to see the long slope of gullied old field extending far up on the south side of the hollow and bounded by forest. Presently there came to her, out of the depth of the forest to eastward, the bay of a single hound, and after it the halloo of a single male voice, and after that, at short intervals, the barking of several dogs. It now appeared that her mad courser had carried her out of the line of the chase and beyond it, yet not so far that she might not soon rejoin her companions. So she waited. After two or three minutes, a hound in the depth of the forest gave the long, wild, shrieking cry that announces the "jumping" or starting of game from its place of rest or hiding; and almost instantly several others joined in the clamor. Then she saw something dusky-red, running along the hillside, leaping the gullies, and making for the forest on the eastern side of the field. At the same moment she saw Colonel Jenkins gallop into open ground, somewhat farther down the slope; and in another moment saw a number of hounds rush out of the forest. Next she saw Huntley's Delta enter the field far up the slope of the hill, and bear toward the course pursued by the game.

The fierce chorus of the hounds and the whoops of the huntsmen fired anew the nerves of the untamed thoroughbred, and he dashed through the

quicksands and mud and willows in the hollow, almost dragging his rider out of the saddle, and tearing her habit into strips. Away he sped up the hill, straining every nerve to overtake the chase. She saw Huntley and Jenkins riding at terrific speed, leaping over gullies, rushing through patches of sassafras shrubs and thorns, heedless of stones and sand pockets. On they swept, more than two hundred yards apart at first, but converging toward the line taken by the fox and the hounds. The two wild riders gained on the pack, so that when the last dog had passed into the woods the two horses were at its edge, and in a second no man or horse was visible, and all the noise of the chase ceased.

But Ruby pursued his way with unabated energy. At the border of the forest his rider discovered a rail fence, very old and much decayed, and overgrown with vines to such an extent as to render it both difficult and dangerous to cross. She strove with all her strength, first to stop him, and having failed in that attempt, then to change his course. But all her efforts were in vain. He ran up to the barrier, eyed it an instant, then reared and cleared it without touching fence, vine, or shrub.

But he had hardly landed when he pricked forward his ears, snorted loudly, and stood still. Eleanor now saw, not far on her left, Colonel Jenkins's horse lying on his side, and partly hidden by a huge granite boulder. His rider she did not see. In front she then saw Delta, and beyond her was a collection of leaping, struggling, snarling hounds. Presently there stood above this contending mass the form of William Huntley. His hat was gone, his hair was disordered, his clothing was much torn,

and from one of his temples there ran a thin stream of blood. He reeled when he attempted to carry beyond the reach of the hounds the large red fox he had taken from them.

Eleanor sprang to the ground, and ran to him. He did not recognize her, and evidently did not see her, though she caught both his arms; but he neither spoke nor responded to her touch. He lurched forward, and dropped his game, and would have fallen but for the support she afforded him.

While the hounds snatched their prey and fought over it, he, still dazed and speechless, staggered forward. Then his strength failed, and despite her efforts to hold him up, he sank to the earth. She held him as well as she might, and when he lay on the ground supported his head on her shoulder, applying and pressing on the bleeding wound her gloves and handkerchief. She held him close against her heart, and kissed the blood-stained lips, crying, "My own dear love! My unhappy, wronged love! Live long enough to hear my remorse—my repentance—oh, give me your pardon!"

The words spoken seemed to penetrate the trance that enveloped him; she felt his heart beat more strongly and rapidly beneath her hand; and then his eyelids parted, and he looked into her face. "Oh!" exclaimed she, "you have come back to me. Stay with me, dear!" He appeared to recognize her and to understand her appeal, for he fixed his eyes on hers, not with the hot longing that blazed in them when he clasped her months ago, but with a tender contentment. She laid her cheek against his, and wept for mingled joy and grief, while, without speaking, or opening his lips, he lifted a bruised and

torn hand to her face, and caressed it with a gentle touch. But the effort was too much for his fast-failing strength; the blood gushed forth; his hand fell limp beside him; and he lay insensible in her arms.

CHAPTER XLV

The first service held in the restored Episcopal Church was a wedding, which took place on the evening of a Wednesday, in January, 1874. The bride, for a good many days, objected, as Squire Williams expressed it, to the venue, insisting that she ought to be married at her own home in the valley of the Connecticut, but Dr. Thompson said that it would be most hazardous for the bridegroom, just recovering from his wound, to travel in midwinter to that region; and the bridegroom suggested that if his people were to be her people, it might be as well that she be married in his own land, and among those who would be her neighbors. And so there came to Cherenden a widow, her son Tom and her daughter Julia.

Almost every white person in the village went to the ceremony, and a good many from the country were at the door waiting long before the hour. Colonel Jenkins was there, on crutches. He announced that both he and his horse Jeb would be able to hunt before long, but that, for the present, their fox-chasing was suspended. Colonel Tomlinson exhibited himself in an expanse of shirt-front and white vest impossible for one less than sixteen-and-a-half stone weight.

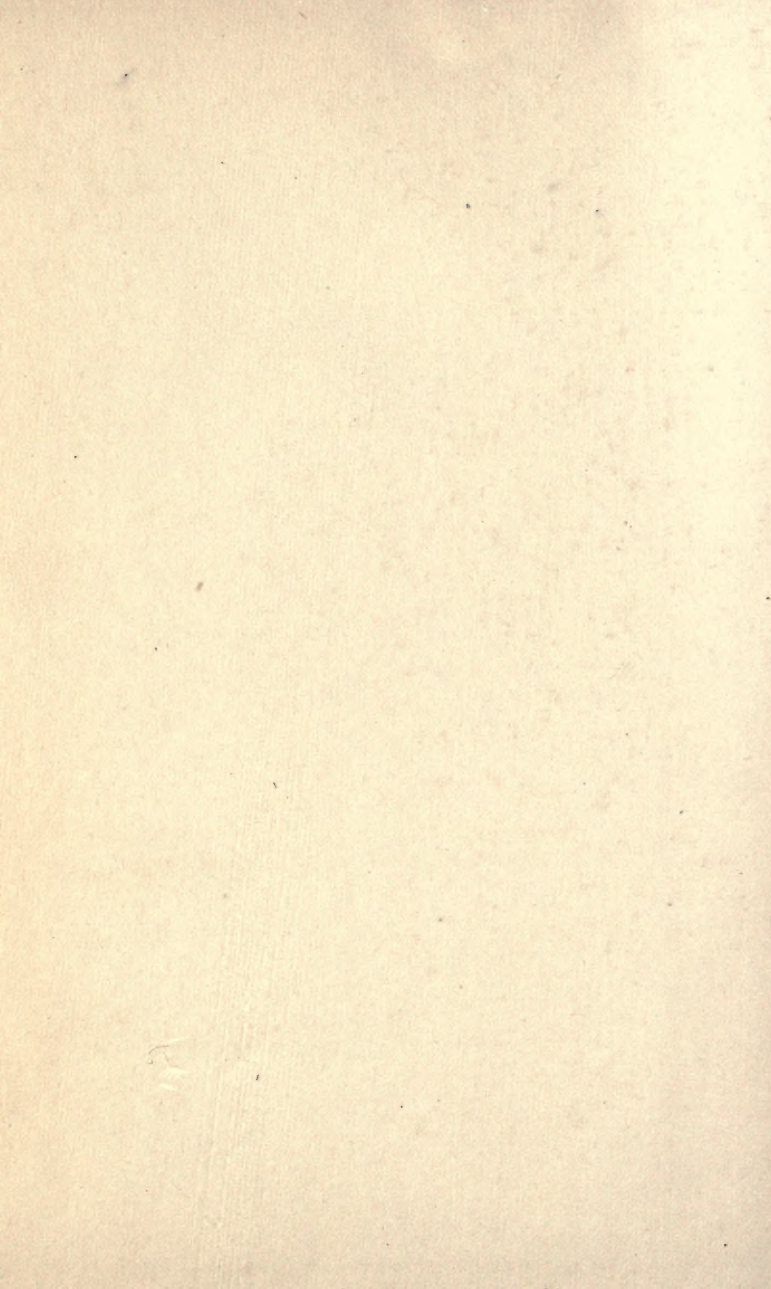
The Widow Hayblow was there, with all her connections and admirers, and Mrs. Lubeck vied with the widow in demonstrations of her own importance and her interest in the function; the Cogburns took an active part; Mrs. Anderson carried thither her

husband and all the guests of the hotel; Mrs. Haxwell came, and brought Minnie; Jennie Lane came with Julia Field, and kept close to her—both of them sparring occasionally with Charlie Tomlinson, who was particularly pert and busy. The Jernigans were there. Tom managed to get into everybody's way, and Sar' Ann was all smiles. Margaret played the organ, and Marcus Aurelius Vaughn was everywhere, taking care of all who came, but as successful as Thomas Jernigan in running against people, impeding their movements, and obstructing their view.

Just after the ceremony, while all sorts of men, women, and children thronged around the bridal pair, a deep, strong voice was heard. "God bless me! After all my hard riding I got here too late to see the knot tied." Then, as it approached from the door, the same voice cried, "But I'll get there. And I'll kiss that bride, if Huntley kills me the next minute!"

Then old Dr. Thompson shouldered his way through the crowd to the bride, threw his long arms around her, and saluted her with a smack that resounded all over the building.

We cannot tell what passed between the bride and Margaret Mason, when they met after the ceremony. No one else heard the words they spoke; the bridegroom himself moved aside, unwilling to intrude on their communing. And they stood long together, each holding the other in close embrace, while all the throng passed out.



UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 000 038 734 0

